

CAN I CATCH AIDS IN ANY OTHER WAY, LIKE I MIGHT CATCH A COLD?

NO! You can't get AIDS from sharing food, telephones, buses, towels, toilets, pencils, or swimming pools. You can't get it from the air or from hugging. You can't get it from tears, sweat or saliva.

A child with AIDS in school cannot give AIDS to another child, even if they touch, wrestle, and share lunches.

SHOULD I GET PREGNANT IF I'M CARRYING THE AIDS VIRUS? WHAT ABOUT BREASTFEEDING?

If you are carrying the AIDS virus, your baby could be born infected and become ill with AIDS. The AIDS virus can also be passed to a baby through breast milk. And pregnancy could be damaging to your own health if you are carrying the AIDS virus.

If you are considering pregnancy and have concerns about AIDS, talk with a doctor or other health care worker who is experienced with AIDS.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION AND HELP ABOUT AIDS AND WOMEN'S ISSUES?

Call the San Francisco AIDS Foundation hotline:

in San Francisco: 863-AIDS
toll-free in Northern California: (800) FOR-AIDS
TDD: 864-6606

9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

OR call the People With AIDS/ARC switchboard at (415) 861-7309. The switchboard is a joint project of People With AIDS/ARC and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

The hotline provides current AIDS information, medical and counselling referrals, and access to community groups and public health activities in your area. Brochures and other educational materials on specific topics are also available.

At work, at home, and with friends, many women are already responding to the AIDS epidemic. Dealing with AIDS brings up many emotions. The San Francisco AIDS Foundation hotline can refer you to support groups and counselors.

The Women's AIDS Network acts as a clearinghouse and information network for women doing AIDS work. It is also a way to find resources to deal with women's issues. You can contact the Women's AIDS Network c/o 333 Valencia St., 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Get the facts, and share them with your family, friends, and co-workers. Get involved with the Women's AIDS Network or other groups.

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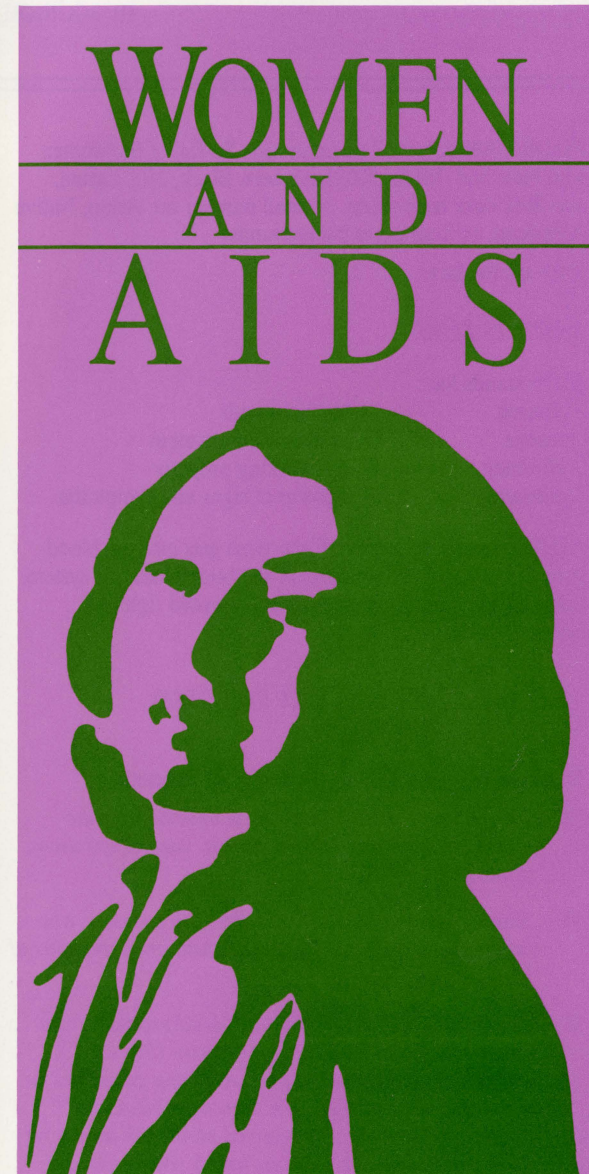


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AIDS IS A WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUE.

In the U.S., about seven percent of people with AIDS are women. As of June 1986, over 1400 women had gotten AIDS; over half have died. Hundreds of children have been born infected with the AIDS virus, or have gotten it from infected blood products received before 1985. In addition, many women's families, friends, and lives have been personally affected by the epidemic.

AIDS CAN Affect all communities. So far, of the women who have had AIDS, 50% have been Black, 23% Latina, and 26% have been white. A small number are Asian, Native American, or from other backgrounds.

Here are the facts:

WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS stands for:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| A quired | — not born with |
| I mmune | — body's defense system |
| D eficiency | — not working properly |
| S yndrome | — a group of signs and symptoms |

AIDS is caused by a virus. If the virus gets into the bloodstream, it attacks certain parts of the body's immune system. Some illnesses that the body normally would fight off become problems.

HOW DOES SOMEONE GET INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS?

There are five ways that a person can get infected:

- *Having sex with someone who is infected with the AIDS virus (through blood, semen, vaginal secretions, urine, or feces)*
- *Sharing intravenous (I.V.) needles with someone who is infected with the AIDS virus (because small amounts of blood are also shared)*
- *Receiving blood transfusions or blood products from someone infected with the AIDS virus. (Since 1985, when the blood banks adopted screening guidelines for the AIDS virus, this has not been a problem, but people who have already received blood still have a very slight risk because AIDS may take 5 years or longer to develop.)*

- *Using sperm from an infected donor for artificial insemination.*

- *As a baby, being born to a woman infected with the AIDS virus.*

Most people who have gotten AIDS have been gay or bisexual men, I.V. drug users, or both. Hemophiliacs are also at high risk if they received blood products before 1985. Of the women who have gotten AIDS, over half have been I.V. drug users. Others got it through sex with male partners. A small number got it from blood transfusions received before 1985.

DOES EVERYONE WHO IS INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS GET AIDS?

NO! Most people infected with the AIDS virus have no symptoms and appear to be in good health.

Some people infected with the virus will get AIDS-Related Complex (ARC). The symptoms of ARC include swollen lymph glands, diarrhea, severe fatigue, rapid weight loss, night sweats, fevers, chills, and infections. These symptoms happen because the immune system has been damaged. They last for weeks or months. Some ARC illnesses are mild, but anyone with any of these symptoms should see a doctor or other health worker.

A smaller group of people who have the virus will get AIDS. The symptoms of AIDS include the symptoms of ARC *plus* shortness of breath, dry cough, and pink or purple spots on the skin. These additional symptoms are caused either by a lung infection called pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP), or a cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma (KS).

The symptoms of ARC and AIDS can also occur in other illnesses. Only a trained doctor can diagnose ARC or AIDS.

Poor health habits may be a co-factor in AIDS. These include not getting enough sleep, having a poor diet, using drugs, and being under a lot of stress. These won't give you AIDS, but they will make your body less able to fight off any infection, including AIDS.

CAN I FIND OUT IF I'VE BEEN INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS?

You can get a blood test to see if you have antibodies (blood proteins which usually mean that your body is fighting an infection) to the AIDS virus. If you test positive, it does NOT mean that you have or will get AIDS. Antibody-positive people should assume they are contagious, but everyone—whether you test positive or negative—should be careful. Call your local AIDS hotline for the nearest free and anonymous test locations.

WHEN IS A WOMAN MOST AT RISK FOR AIDS?

A woman is most at risk for AIDS if she has shared I.V. needles, or had sex without a condom, with someone who was infected with the AIDS virus. Women who have used I.V. drugs or had sex with I.V. drug users, gay or bisexual men, or hemophiliacs since 1977 may have been exposed to the AIDS virus.

A woman may also be at risk if *her sex partner* has had sex without a condom with someone at high risk.

The more sex partners a woman has had, the greater the risk.

A woman using donor insemination to become pregnant is at risk only if the donor is infected. Licensed sperm banks screen donors to prevent this from happening.

A woman who only has sex with other women is at low risk. There are no proven cases of female-to-female sexual transmission of AIDS. (There *are* cases of women, including lesbians, getting AIDS from each other through sharing I.V. needles.) A woman who has sex with both men and women is more at risk through sex with men.

A woman in a monogamous relationship or who has had few partners, and who has not used I.V. drugs or had sex with someone who does, is at lowest risk.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT GETTING OR SPREADING AIDS?

Unless you KNOW that a sex partner is not infected,

- *Don't allow his/her blood (including menstrual blood), semen, urine, vaginal secretions, or feces to enter your vagina, anus, or mouth.*
- *Use condoms (rubbers) for vaginal, oral and anal sex. The AIDS virus cannot get through a condom if it is properly used and does not break.*
- *The spermicide nonoxynol 9, in contraceptive foams, jellies, and creams, kills the virus on contact. Use it in addition to a condom.*
- *If you think you might be infected, NEVER allow your blood, urine, vaginal secretions, or feces to enter another person's body. Always use a condom for sex.*

Know your sex partners. Ask questions about past sexual history and drug use. Be honest about your own past.

Never share I.V. needles.