

# Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) & Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Fact Sheet

## What is HIV & AIDS?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. When left untreated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

## What are the signs and symptoms?

### Acute Infection:

- 2 to 4 weeks after infection, individuals may experience flu-like symptoms which include fever, fatigue, sore throat, chills, swollen lymph nodes, and mouth ulcers. These symptoms may last up to several weeks. Some infected individuals do not have any symptoms at all.

### Chronic Infection:

- At this stage, the body's immune response naturally stabilizes the viral level. At this point, the virus reproduces at much lower levels causing many individuals to not have any symptoms. Depending on one's body, this stage can last up to 15 years. HIV is still transmittable during this stage.
- Without medical care, the body will eventually no longer be able to maintain stable viral loads and the infection will progress to the next stage.

### Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS):

- At this stage, the immune system is compromised, and individuals are vulnerable to infections or diseases known as opportunistic infections. Without treatment, people with AIDS typically survive about three years.

## How does it spread?

HIV can be spread through blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk. Sexually transmitted infection occurs through anal or vaginal sex, however, the risk of contracting HIV through oral sex is not zero. Transmission can occur between a pregnant woman and their child as well.

## How is it treated?

Syphilis can be treated and cured by antibiotics however these antibiotics cannot reverse any damage that has already been done by the infection.

## Prevention:

- Avoid unprotected sexual activities that may put you at risk.
- Use a condom correctly every time you have vaginal or anal sex and use a dental dam during oral sex.

## For more information:

Visit the CDC here: [HIV & AIDS - CDC Resource](#)



**FORT BEND**  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

4520 Reading Road, Rosenberg, TX 77471  
281-750-6939

[www.fbchhs.org](http://www.fbchhs.org)



*This fact sheet is for information purposes and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care professional.*