

HIV & AIDS

What is HIV?

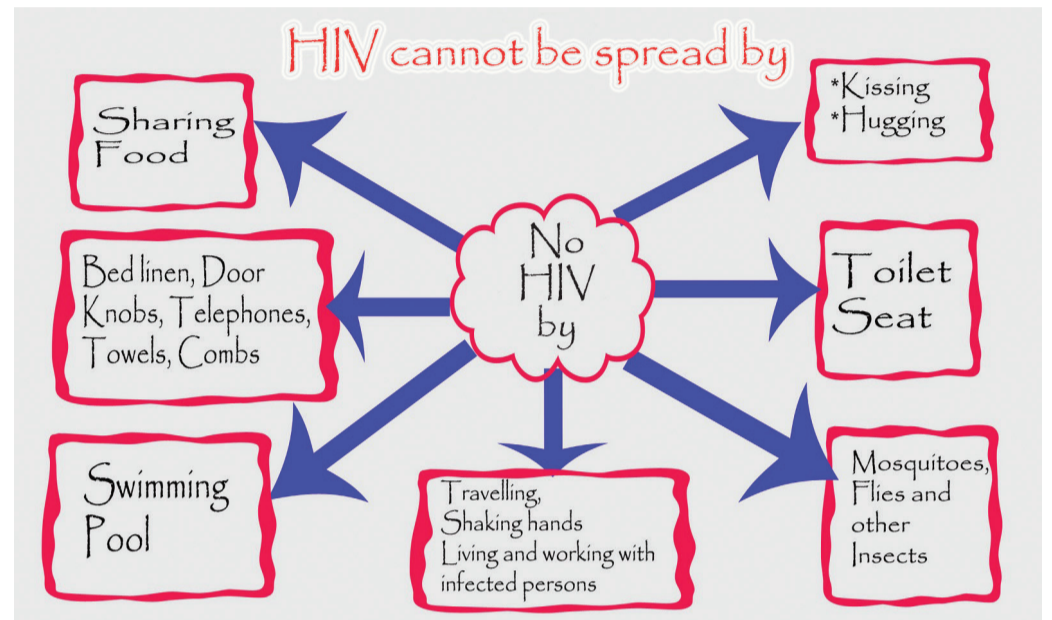
HIV is a virus that infects and destroys the body's immune system resulting in AIDS and death

How is HIV spread?

- Through sex without a condom
- From infected mothers to their children during pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Through sharing of infected needles or syringes

HIV does not discriminate - it infects all ages and all races; it affects heterosexuals, gays and lesbians; anyone can be infected, no matter if they are rich or poor

Amongst South Africans aged 15 to 49, approximately one in every six is infected¹



How soon after an exposure should I test for HIV infection?

All tests have a "window period"- the time from when someone becomes infected until the test becomes positive²

HIV 4th generation ELISA – test after 3 weeks (recommended screening test)

Rapid (finger prick) HIV tests – test after 4 weeks

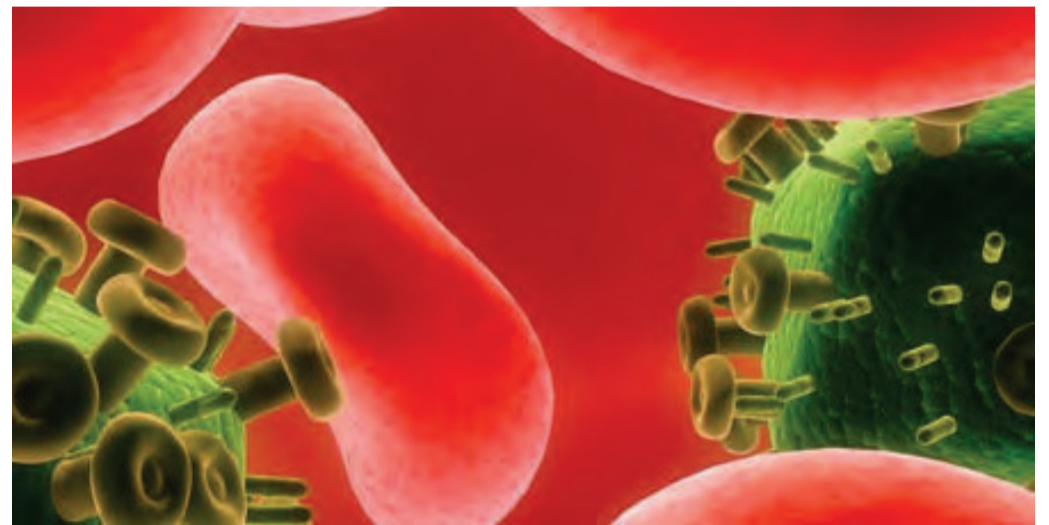
If using antiretrovirals for post-exposure prophylaxis, test 2 weeks after stopping the medication³

My HIV test result came back positive. What now?

Speak to a health care worker about treatment for HIV

There is effective treatment for HIV

It is better to access appropriate care early



References

1. <http://www.avert.org/south-africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>, accessed 17 April 2012
2. Glass, AJ. Diagnosis and monitoring of HIV infection. South African Family Practice, 2006, 48; 8: 46a-c
3. Southern African HIV Clinicians Society. Post-exposure prophylaxis. The Southern African Journal of HIV Medicine, Winter 2008: 36-45

SUPPORTING HIV&AIDS TESTING

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