

HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV)/AIDS FACT SHEET

What is HIV?

HIV is a virus that infects cells of the human immune system and eventually leads to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

What are the symptoms of HIV?

The progression of HIV infection varies depending on how you become infected. Children who are infected at birth may become symptomatic as early as 1 year of age, and as late as adolescence. Symptoms include diarrhea, fever, weight loss, failure to thrive, oral candidiasis, and opportunistic infections. Symptoms will likely change as the disease progresses.

How does HIV spread?

Most children become infected from HIV-positive mothers during pregnancy, delivery, or postnatally via the mother's breast milk.

Is there treatment for HIV?

Yes. While there is not yet a cure for HIV, treatment that reduces symptoms and delays AIDS is available for all ages. For details visit:

<http://www.avert.org/hiv-treatment-children.htm>

How can the spread of HIV be prevented?

- All pregnant women should be screened for HIV as early as possible during each pregnancy.
- Women with HIV who take antiretroviral medication during pregnancy as recommended can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to their babies to less than 1%.
- Routine screening of children is not necessary. The child's healthcare provider and family are responsible for determining whether the child is at risk and should be tested.
- Children and staff should not share toothbrushes or nail clippers.
- Clean and disinfect blood and body fluid spills in the same way you would to prevent any other communicable disease that can be transmitted via blood:
 - Clean all surfaces and objects contaminated with blood or body fluids with soap or a detergent and water, and then disinfect immediately with an effective disinfectant. HIV, as well as other infectious germs, may be found in blood and other body fluids of any person even when there are no symptoms to suggest infection is present.
 - Wear disposable medical gloves when handling blood (nosebleeds, cuts) or items, surfaces, or clothing contaminated with blood or bloody body fluids or when there are open sores, cuts, or abrasions on the hands.
 - Wash hands immediately after contact with any body fluids, even if gloves have been worn. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water.
- See the Contra Costa Health website for prevention information regarding transmission from sexual contact and injection drug use.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/aids/>