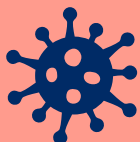




# HIV: An Overview



Human immunodeficiency virus, or **HIV**, is a virus that attacks the body's immune system



HIV can enter the body through blood, semen, vaginal fluid or breast milk. It is most often spread through **sex or sharing needles** with a person who is living with HIV and is not virally suppressed

HIV is **not** spread through touching, kissing, or sharing household items (toilets, cups, silverware, etc.)

## HIV is preventable and treatable

Although anyone can get HIV, it **does not** affect all communities equally. Populations that are most affected by HIV include:



- Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men
- People who inject drugs
- Black and Hispanic communities
- Youth (aged 13-24 years)

People who are **HIV-negative** can:

- Get tested for HIV regularly
- Use condoms during sex
- Use clean needles and other equipment when injecting drugs
- Use PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis): a medicine that reduces the chance of getting HIV **after** an exposure
- Use PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis): a medicine taken once daily to help prevent HIV **before** exposure



People who are **HIV-positive** can live long and healthy lives if they take HIV medicine.

**U = U**

People who take their medicine consistently can achieve an **undetectable** viral load. Having an undetectable viral load means that HIV is **untransmittable** (or cannot be passed) to others through sex.

If you have questions about HIV or would like to find out more about HIV prevention and treatment services near you, please contact the **Illinois HIV/STD Hotline** (Call: 1-800-243-2437; Text: 1-872-243-1004).

Calls and texts are **confidential** and **free of charge**.

