

# HIV / AIDS

## COMMUNICATION AND PREVENTION

Hahn Intermediate 6th Grade February 2026

# TALKING ABOUT SENSITIVE TOPICS...



Parents are a child's first and most important teacher!

Your parents want what is best for you!

Who are some other trusted adults you know?

Sensitive conversations build trust!



# WHAT IS HIV / AIDS?

## **HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus**

- A virus that causes AIDS
- Attacks immune cells called CD4 cells (T cells- your fighter cells)
- Weakens a person's ability to fight off infections

## **AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**

- Final stage of HIV
- CD4 (fighter cells) cells drop to an extremely low level
- Ability to fight infections is completely lost

# HOW DO PEOPLE GET HIV/AIDS?

*HIV transmission can occur when blood, semen, pre-seminal fluid, vaginal fluid, or breast milk from an infected person enters the body of an uninfected person.*

Primary ways of transmission:

- Contact with blood from an infected person (open cut)
- Sharing needles (IV Drug Abuse) including unsterilized tattoo or piercing needles with an infected person
- Blood transfusion (rare in U.S. since blood became tested in 1985)
- Occupational exposure (needle stick with infected blood)
- From HIV-infected women to their babies at birth or through breastfeeding
- Having sex with an infected person (vaginal sex is sexual intercourse and can transmit disease and/or result in pregnancy; oral & anal sex are sexual behaviors that carry health risks and can transmit disease).

**Note: A person may not know they are infected!**

# WAYS HIV/AIDS IS NOT SPREAD

HIV/AIDS is **not** transmitted through:

- Touching, kissing, shaking hands, or hugging a person infected with HIV or AIDS (ordinary social contact)
- Contact with toilet seats or door handles
- Sharing cups, utensils, or telephones
- Mosquito bites



# SYMPTOMS OF HIV/AIDS

## HIV Symptoms

- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Headache
- Skin rash
- Sore throat
- Weight loss
- Yeast infection of the mouth (thrush)
- Swollen lymph nodes

\*Similar to flu symptoms but they do not go away\*

## AIDS Progression

- Usually develops about 10 years after initial HIV infection
- Treatment may delay full blown AIDS but there is no cure for HIV/AIDS at this time.

### Opportunistic Infections...

- Pneumonia
- Eye infections
- Meningitis
- Brain Illness
- Cervical Cancer
- Cancer of the skin and mouth
- Lymphoma
- Fungal Infections

Severe body wasting begins to take place

# HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

Ways to prevent being infected:

- Avoid contact with blood and other bodily fluids
- You must assume everyone is infected
  - Wear safety equipment in the workplace
  - Avoid use of illegal IV drugs
  - Exercise caution in getting body piercings and tattoos (check the credentials)
  - Practice "**abstinence.**" Not having sex until you are in a committed monogamous relationship (i.e., married) is the only way that is 100% effective in preventing the sexual transmission of HIV.

# HOW DOES A PERSON KNOW THEY ARE INFECTED?

Blood test (this is the most accurate test)

- Detects antibodies specific to HIV
- Antibodies may be detected in as little as two weeks to six months after infection

Buccal Swab (inner cheek)

- Requires additional follow-up testing



Home testing kits

- Require follow-up with doctor
- Not as reliable (but getting better with advances in medicine)

# MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR HIV/AIDS

Presently, there is no cure for HIV/AIDS

- New treatments delay the progress of the disease
- Currently treated as a life-long illness.

Medical treatment may delay disease progression

- Highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART)
- Commonly called the HIV "cocktail"
  - It's expensive
  - Treatment has unpleasant side-effects

CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) estimates approximately 1.2 million people in U.S. have HIV/AIDS...

25% do not know they are infected (300,000 people)

42,000 new cases of HIV each year

# LIFE EFFECTS OF LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

There are *Emotional, Social and Financial* effects to living with HIV/AIDS

Not only on the person infected, but on their family as well

Treatment side-effects

Possible anti-viral drug resistance

Limited opportunities

Financial and social

Overall- A poor quality of life

# QUESTIONS?

