

Monroe School District
Grade 6 HIV and the Immune System
2-Day Supplemental Health Lesson Plan

Overview: This self-contained, 2-day mini-unit is designed to supplement comprehensive health instruction (such as the *Botvin LifeSkills* curriculum) and meets the requirements of Washington State's RCW 28A.300.475. It serves as the foundational precursor to the 7th-grade unit. These lessons maintain strict medical and scientific accuracy, focusing on basic immune function, debunking casual transmission myths, and practicing basic assertiveness skills.

To protect classroom safety and respect local expectations, **students should never feel expected to share personal or family medical information.** Families must be notified at least 10 days in advance of when these lessons will be taught.

Standards Alignment

National Health Education Standards (NHES):

- **NHES 1:** Comprehending concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- **NHES 4:** Use interpersonal communication skills to support health and safety.

WA State Health Standards:

H1.6-8: Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.

H4.6-8: Use interpersonal communication skills to support health and safety.

Learning Targets

Students will:

- Explain how the immune system protects the body from illness and how HIV affects this system.
- Identify the specific body fluids that can transmit HIV and distinguish them from everyday casual contact.
- Identify trusted adults.
- Evaluate reliable sources of health and puberty information.
- Demonstrate basic refusal, assertiveness, and boundary-setting skills in peer pressure situations.
- Explain how misinformation and myths about illnesses can lead to the unfair treatment of others.

Pacing & Materials

Duration: Two 35–40 minute class periods.

Day 1 Materials: Science notebooks, printed sets of Inquiry [Sorting Cards](#) (1 set per student pair), T-Chart display (*Can Spread HIV / Cannot Spread HIV*).

Day 2 Materials: Display slides of scenario prompts, printed [Scenario Cards](#) (1 set per table group), [Exit Tickets](#).

Day 1: Concept Mastery (HIV & The Immune System)

1. Vocabulary Foundations (Day 1 Focus)

Provide these definitions to students on a display slide or have them copy them into their science notebooks:

Term	Student-Friendly Definition
Virus	A tiny germ that can enter the body and sometimes cause illness.

Monroe School District
Grade 6 HIV and the Immune System

Immune System	The body's natural defense system that helps fight off germs and keep us healthy.
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus. A specific virus that weakens the body's immune system over time by destroying defensive cells.
Immunodeficiency	When the body's natural disease-fighting system is weakened or not working fully.
Transmission	The way germs, a disease, or a virus spreads from one person to another.
Casual Contact	Everyday, non-sexual interactions like hugging, shaking hands, sharing food, coughing, or sitting near someone.
Misinformation	Incorrect or false information that is spread, often because people do not have the facts.
Respect	Treating people with kindness, fairness, and care.

2. Introduction & Word Study (~5–7 minutes)

Teacher Script: > **"**Today we are beginning a lesson about health, disease prevention, and how the body protects itself from illness. We are going to focus on the immune system and a specific virus called HIV. To start, let's think about the word 'virus'. Turn and talk to your elbow partner for 60 seconds: What do you already know about how viruses spread?"*

Student Activity: Turn-and-talk with a partner.

Teacher Clarification: > **"**A virus is a tiny germ that can enter the body and make a person sick. Different viruses spread in different ways. Some, like the cold or flu, are airborne and spread through coughing or sneezing.

HIV spreads differently. HIV stands for **Human Immunodeficiency Virus**. Let's break down that big scientific word:

- **Immune** refers to your immune system—your body's defense system.
- **Deficiency** means not having enough of something, or something not working fully.

So, **immunodeficiency** means the body's natural defense system is weakened. HIV is a virus that slowly damages these defense cells, making it harder for the body to fight off everyday germs."

Visual Representation (Draw on the Board):

Healthy Body:  (germs) →  (immune system shield) →  (healthy body)

Weakened Defense:   (germs) →   (broken shield) →  (**illness**)

3. Inquiry Sorting Activity (~10–12 minutes)

Student Activity: Distribute one set of pre-cut [Inquiry Sorting Cards](#) to each pair of students. Students sort the cards in pairs. Circulate to identify common myths (such as mosquito bites or sharing water bottles).

[Teacher Set of Cards](#) with explanations

Monroe School District
Grade 6 HIV and the Immune System

Teacher Script: *"Before we discuss the facts together, we are going to do a quick sorting activity. Work with your partner to place each card under one of two categories on your desk: 'Can Spread HIV' or 'Cannot Spread HIV.'"

You are not expected to know every answer perfectly right now. The goal is to discuss your ideas respectfully, figure out what we already know, and identify what we need to clarify."*

4. Direct Instruction & Clarification (~10 minutes)

Teacher Activity: Display a T-chart on the board to confirm the correct categories. Have students adjust their desk cards as you review them.

Teacher Script: > *"Let's establish the medically accurate facts. Unlike cold and flu germs, HIV cannot survive well outside the human body, and it cannot spread through the air. This means it is physically impossible to transmit HIV through casual, everyday contact."

HIV can only spread when specific body fluids from a person with HIV enter another person's bloodstream or body. These specific fluids are: **blood, semen, vaginal fluids, rectal fluids, and breast milk.**

For 6th graders, the most important thing to understand is that HIV is transmitted only through specific behaviors: during close sexual contact, or through blood-to-blood contact (such as sharing needles or syringes used for medicine, tattoos, or piercings).

Today, highly effective daily medicines help people with HIV live long, healthy, and active lives. This medicine also lowers the amount of virus in the body so much that the risk of spreading the virus to others is reduced to almost zero. People living with HIV go to school, play sports, and should always be treated with kindness, fairness, and respect."*

Teacher Sorting Key:

Can Spread HIV	Cannot Spread HIV (Casual Contact)
● Blood ● Semen / Vaginal fluids ● Breast milk ● Sharing needles or syringes ● Unprotected sexual contact	● Hugging, shaking hands, or closed-mouth kissing ● Sharing food, drinks, or water bottles ● Coughing, sneezing, sweat, or tears ● Mosquito or other insect bites ● Sharing toilets, showers, or desks

Differentiation & Scaffolding Strategies

For Struggling Readers & English Language Learners (ELL)

- **Visual Vocabulary Anchors:** Provide visual flashcards matching key terms with simple icons (e.g., a shield for "Immune System," a microscopic lock-and-key or germ symbol for "Virus," and crossing out everyday contact icons for "Casual Contact").
- **Scaffolded Sorts:** For pairs needing support, pre-sort 2–3 obvious cards (like *Hugging* and *Shaking Hands* under "Cannot Spread") to establish immediate success, or highlight the target fluids on the "Can Spread" cards in yellow.

Monroe School District
Grade 6 HIV and the Immune System

- **Structured Discussion Starters:** Provide sentence stems during the sorting activity:
 - *"I think this card goes under _____ because _____."*
 - *"I disagree because the notes say HIV only spreads through _____."*

For Advanced Learners (Deeper Inquiry, Not More Work)

Keep these students engaged in deeper cognitive analysis directly within their peer discussion times, rather than handing them separate, isolated worksheets:

- **Day 1: Environmental Virology (Inquiry Extension):** During the Inquiry Sorting Activity, challenge early-finishing pairs to analyze the *why* behind viral survival:
 - *"Why can cold or flu germs survive on doorknobs for hours while HIV cannot? What does that tell us about how fragile the HIV virus is outside the human body?"*
- **Day 1: Linguistic Word Detective:** Have students look closer at our etymology study. Ask them to find other scientific or everyday words that use the Greek root **micro-** (meaning small, as in *microscope, microorganism, microwave*) or the Latin root **deficiency** (meaning lacking/failing, as in *deficit, vitamin deficiency*) to establish structural linguistic connections in their science notebooks.
- **Day 2: Group Dynamic Leadership:** During table scenarios, task these students with facilitating their group's discussion using targeted peer-questions:
 - *"Why do you think fear makes myths spread faster than medical facts?"*
 - *"How does peer pressure use subtle social rules to make people feel uncomfortable saying no?"*

5. Reflection & Closure (~8–10 minutes)

Student Activity: Students write independently in their science notebooks.

Display Prompts:

- *What is one thing you learned or clarified today about how HIV is and is not spread?*
- *Why is having medically accurate health information important?*
- *How can misinformation or myths lead to people being treated unfairly?*

Sentence Frames for Support:

- *"One thing I clarified today is that HIV cannot spread through _____."*
- *"Accurate health facts are important because _____."*
- *"Misinformation can cause people to be treated unfairly by _____."*

Partner Share-out: Have students turn to a neighbor and share one written reflection. Remind them: *"If you hear your partner state something inaccurate, respectfully refer back to our board notes to help clarify it together."*

Monroe School District
Grade 6 HIV and the Immune System

Day 2: Healthy Choices, Boundaries, and Respect

1. Vocabulary Foundations (Day 2 Focus)

Introduce these terms as tools for handling real-life situations:

Term	Student-Friendly Definition
Assertiveness	Communicating your boundaries clearly, directly, and respectfully.
Refusal Skills	Clear strategies for saying "no" in unsafe, peer-pressure, or uncomfortable situations.
Peer Pressure	Feeling pushed or influenced by people your own age to do something you are not comfortable doing.
Trusted Adult	A safe, reliable adult (like a parent, teacher, school counselor, or nurse) who can answer questions and provide accurate guidance.
Stigma	Treating someone unfairly or unkindly because of a health condition, illness, or difference.

2. Connect & Review (~3 minutes)

Teacher Script: > "Yesterday, we explored how our immune system acts as a shield and learned that HIV cannot spread through casual contact. Today, we are going to connect those facts to our Botvin LifeSkills assertiveness tools.

We will practice making healthy decisions, setting safe physical boundaries, and standing up against myths and peer pressure."

Student Activity: Quick turn-and-talk: "Who is one trusted adult in our school or community you can ask when you have questions about health or growing up?"

3. Direct Instruction: Communicating Boundaries and Accessing Help (~5 minutes)

Teacher Script: "As you grow older, you will face situations where you need to make healthy choices for your physical and emotional wellness. Sometimes, information you hear from peers or find online is incomplete, confusing, or incorrect.

If you ever have questions about physical changes, relationships, or health, the safest action is to ask a **trusted adult** or a **healthcare professional** (like a doctor or school nurse). They use science and research to give you medically accurate facts.

Additionally, remember the verbal assertiveness skills we practiced earlier this year:

- **Say no directly:** Use a calm, firm, and clear voice.
- **Give a simple reason:** State a fact or personal boundary clearly ('Tell it like it is').
- **Offer an alternative:** Suggest something else to do or change the subject.
- **Walk away:** If peer pressure continues, remove yourself from the situation."

Monroe School District
Grade 6 HIV and the Immune System

4. Scenario Practice: Clear Boundaries & Refusing Pressure (~20 minutes)

Group Activity: Divide students into table groups. Hand out the **Grade 6 Scenario Cards**. Have students work with a partner to read and analyze at least two scenarios.

Student Prompts (Display on Slide):

- *What is the challenge, myth, or peer pressure in this situation?*
- *What would be a healthy, safe, or respectful choice?*
- *Which assertiveness or refusal skill could help?*
- *What could the person say or do?*
- *Which trusted adult could they talk to if they need help?*

Sentence Frames for Support:

- *"The peer pressure/misinformation in this situation is ____."*
- *"A healthy and safe choice would be to ____."*
- *"To be assertive, the person could say: '____'."*
- *"A trusted adult who could help is the ____."*

Day 2 Scenario Cards (Grade 6 Focus)

These 8 scenarios are strictly factual, objective, and neutral. They contain no family references to protect student privacy and avoid subjective moralizing, focusing instead on school boundaries, puberty questions, vaping pressure, and casual contact myths.

Scenario 1: Peer Pressure and Vaping

Botvin Connection: Resisting Peer Pressure / Saying No.

Context: Jordan is hanging out with friends after school when one student pulls out a vape and encourages everyone to try it. Some students laugh and say, "It's not a big deal. Everyone does it at least once." Jordan knows vaping is harmful to breathing and health but worries friends might make fun of him if he refuses.

Refusal Skill Practice: How can Jordan use a clear, firm "No" and offer an alternative activity to the group?

Scenario 2: Correcting Classroom Myths

Botvin Connection: Asserting Rights / Standing Up for Facts.

Context: During lunch, a student claims that people can contract HIV from sitting next to someone or sharing desks in class. A few classmates look worried and start talking about moving their seats. Avery knows this is medically inaccurate but isn't sure whether to speak up.

Refusal Skill Practice: What medically accurate fact can Avery share to reassure the group and stop the spread of misinformation?

Scenario 3: Questions About Puberty and Growth

Botvin Connection: Making Requests / Asking for Help.

Context: Maria has heard confusing and embarrassing rumors from classmates about puberty and body changes. Maria wants to find accurate, factual information but feels nervous and self-conscious about bringing up the topic.

Refusal Skill Practice: Who is a trusted adult Maria could talk to, and what is a respectful way to request safe, accurate information?

Monroe School District
Grade 6 HIV and the Immune System

Scenario 4: Setting PE Locker Room Boundaries

Botvin Connection: Asserting Rights / Setting Boundaries.

Context: In the PE locker room, a group of students begins making loud, uncomfortable jokes about body changes and physical growth. Liam asks them to stop, but the jokes continue. Liam feels embarrassed and wants the behavior to end.

Refusal Skill Practice: How can Liam assertively state his boundary, and what should he do if the disrespectful jokes continue?

Scenario 5: Rumors and School Absences

Botvin Connection: Respectful Communication / Avoiding Stigma.

Context: A student is out sick for a week. Rumors start spreading at school that the student has a "dangerous, contagious illness," and classmates begin saying they won't sit near the student when they return. Taylor feels uncomfortable listening to the rumors but isn't sure how to respond.

Refusal Skill Practice: What can Taylor say to classmates to encourage respectful communication and stop the rumors from causing unfair treatment?

Scenario 6: Dissecting Online Video Claims

Botvin Connection: Media Literacy / Analyzing Sources.

Context: While scrolling through social media, Chris sees a dramatic video claiming that common bugs and mosquitoes can transmit HIV to humans. The video uses scary music and tells people to buy a special insect spray to stay safe. Chris wants to find out if this is true.

Refusal Skill Practice: How can Chris check if this claim is medically accurate? What trusted sources of health information should Chris consult?

Scenario 7: Group Chat Boundary Pressure

Botvin Connection: Resisting Peer Pressure / Protecting Privacy.

Context: In a school group chat, some classmates start asking Noah to share private information about why another student has been visiting the school nurse. One friend messages, "Come on, just tell us what you know, it's not a big deal." Noah feels uncomfortable sharing someone else's private details.

Refusal Skill Practice: What assertive refusal phrase can Noah use in the chat to protect student privacy and set a clear boundary?

Scenario 8: Respectful Peer Group Discussions

Botvin Connection: Asserting Rights Respectfully / Empathy.

Context: During a class activity, some students begin making unkind jokes and assumptions about individuals who are living with long-term medical conditions. Sam notices a classmate become quiet and visibly uncomfortable during the conversation.

Refusal Skill Practice: How can Sam use respectful communication to stand up for others and change the subject to a more positive topic?

5. Reflection & Closure (~5–8 minutes)

Student Activity: Students return to their individual seats to complete their Exit Tickets.

Monroe School District
Grade 6 HIV and the Immune System

Exit Ticket Prompts:

- *One health choice I can make to support my physical or emotional wellness is _____.*
- *One assertive refusal skill I can use to stand up to peer pressure is _____.*
- *One reason why sharing factual, medically accurate information supports a respectful school is _____.*

Teacher Closing Script: *"Over the last two days, we learned how our body's immune system protects us and established that HIV is a medical condition that only spreads in specific ways—never through casual touch, sharing space, or everyday contact.*

We also practiced key skills like saying no, setting safe boundaries, and seeking help from trusted adults. Next year in 7th grade, you will build on this knowledge by exploring other infections, examining how modern treatments work to manage viral illnesses, and applying these decision-making skills to even more complex situations. Thank you for your respectful participation."