

AGE

is no protection



against
HIV/AIDS

*What men and women
50 and older need to know*

*In Illinois, 11% of
persons living with AIDS
are **over** the age of **50**.*

HIV/AIDS and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) typically are associated with younger people, but they also occur among older individuals. In fact, 11 percent of people living with AIDS in Illinois are persons 50 years of age and older.

One reason is that older adults today are staying sexually active longer, putting them at increased risk for HIV and STDs. In part, this is being made possible by new treatments for sexual dysfunction.

Seniors exposed to HIV have a greater risk of infection than younger people because their immune systems are already weakened by the aging process. Since HIV-related symptoms may be mistaken for other illnesses, seniors may not be properly diagnosed as having HIV infection or AIDS.

Older individuals need to learn about HIV and other STDs and about how to protect themselves. It is also important that they share this important information with others, including family members.



"Age won't protect you. Knowledge will."

How do people get HIV?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is found in the blood, semen and vaginal secretions of infected persons. It can be spread in the following ways:

- Having unprotected sex — vaginal, anal or oral — with an HIV-infected person (male or female)
- Sharing needles or injection equipment with an HIV-infected person to inject drugs, including hormones, insulin or steroids
- From an HIV-infected woman to her baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding

Before 1985, some people were infected with HIV through blood transfusions or use of blood products. Since 1985, blood products have been screened for HIV, so infection through a blood transfusion is extremely rare.



"I was married for more than 20 years. I was totally unprepared for being single again and I took a lot of risks."

You can protect yourself!

- ✦ Correctly use a latex condom every time you have sex (vaginal, anal or oral). Even if pregnancy is not a concern, HIV and other STDs should be.
- ✦ To avoid infection through sex, the only sure way is not to have sex — vaginal, anal or oral — or to have sex only with someone who is not infected and who only has sex with you.
- ✦ Older women may need to use additional lubricant during intercourse. Vaginal dryness can result in tears and abrasions that can increase the risk of infection with HIV or other STDs. Use only water-based lubricants with condoms.
- ✦ Limit use of alcohol and don't use drugs. They may prevent you from protecting yourself and others.
- ✦ Never share needles or equipment to inject drugs (including hormones, insulin or steroids).
- ✦ Talk with your partner about HIV and get tested.

HIV cannot be spread by —

- ✦ Giving blood
- ✦ Toilet seats
- ✦ Hot tubs
- ✦ Working with or being around someone with HIV
- ✦ Hugging
- ✦ Coughs or sneezes
- ✦ Shaking hands
- ✦ Sweat or tears
- ✦ Mosquitoes
- ✦ Simple (closed-mouth) kissing
- ✦ Eating food prepared or handled by an HIV-infected person

Where can I get an HIV test?

You can be tested for HIV and other STDs at local health departments and at community-based organizations, including some outreach testing sites, throughout Illinois. To find a nearby testing site that's right for you, call the AIDS/HIV & STD Hotline at 1-800-243-2437 or TTY (hearing impaired use only) 1-800-782-0423. Or, contact your personal doctor to arrange for a test.

Where do I get more information?

It can be hard to ask for help or advice, especially about such private things as your sex life or drug use. No matter where you live in Illinois, you can call the AIDS/HIV & STD Hotline (1-800-243-2437; TTY, hearing impaired use only, 1-800-782-0423). It's free and anonymous (no names). Trained counselors are available seven days a week (9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends) to answer your questions and to provide information.

What can I do about HIV/AIDS?

- Know the facts
- Protect yourself
- Educate others
- Get tested
- Stay healthy



"You wouldn't want your son or daughter to have sex without a condom. So why would you do it?"

HIV/AIDS

Facts for Life

- AIDS is a disease caused by HIV (human immunodeficiency virus).
- Testing is the only sure way to know if you are infected with HIV.
- A person infected with HIV may have no symptoms but can still infect others.
- HIV is spread through unprotected sex with an infected person. Both men and women can spread HIV.
- To avoid HIV infection through sex, don't have sex, or have sex only with a partner who isn't infected and who only has sex with you.
- Using condoms correctly every time you have sex reduces the risk of HIV infection.
- HIV also is spread by sharing needles and injection equipment.
- An infected woman can pass HIV to her baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.
- Donating blood is safe.
- HIV is not spread by hugs, handshakes or kisses.
- HIV is not spread by mosquitoes.
- There is no cure or vaccine for HIV. However, current treatments can keep you healthier longer.



AIDS/HIV & STD

1.800.243.2437

H O T L I N E

Illinois Department of Public Health