

Since high risk of  
acquiring the aids



Since the AIDS virus reduces the natural immunity of the human body therefore persons suffering from AIDS become easy target to many other infections or diseases. The persons suffering from AIDS actually die from other infections or diseases which attack the body due to weakened state of immunity. This is because the human body cannot resist the disease causing organisms under those conditions when its natural defence mechanism has been destroyed by AIDS virus. AIDS is incurable hence invariably fatal. At present there is no vaccine available against HIV infection.

**Causative Organism:**

AIDS is caused by a virus known as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

**Mode of Spread:**

HIV virus is transmitted from one person to another by following methods: (i) Sexual contact i.

e. vaginal, oral or anal sex can spread AIDS as the virus is excreted in the semen or vaginal secretions. (ii) Through transfusion of blood infected with AIDS virus. (iii) Through contaminated needles and syringes. (iv) It is transmitted from infected mother to the foetus through placenta. A person suffering from other sexually transmitted disease runs a very high risk of acquiring the AIDS virus because STDs usually, cause ulcers, sores or discharge; the HIV enters more easily through these openings in the skin.

The following persons are most exposed to AIDS: (i) People with multiple sexual partners.

(ii) Truck drivers and others visiting prostitutes. (iii) Persons getting limbs tattooed/ears pierced. AIDS does not spread: (i) Through shaking hands. (ii) Through casual social contact with the patient. (iii) By playing with infected person. (iv) By sharing food, towels, clothes and toilets.

(v) Through mosquito or other insect bites.

**Incubation Period:**

Incubation period is 10 years.

**Sign and Symptoms:**

Signs and symptoms of AIDS include (i) Weight loss. (ii) Fever or night sweating for longer than one month (intermittent constant).

(iii) Chronic diarrhea which persists for more than one month. (iv) Swelling in the groins. (v) Purple spots on the skin.

(vi) Persistent cough and shortness of breath.

**Prevention and Control:**

At present there is no vaccine or cure for treatment of HIV infection or AIDS.

Until a vaccine or cure for AIDS is found the best is to adopt suitable measures by which AIDS can be prevented. The following preventive measures should be adopted: (i) Have only one uninfected sexual partner and do not indulge in multiple sexual partners. (ii) Avoid going to prostitutes for sexual intercourse. (iii) Do not indulge in oral/anal sex.

(iv) Use condom during sexual intercourse. (v) Properly sterilise the needles and syringes. Preferably use disposable needles and syringes. (vi) Women

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suffering from AIDS or who are at high risk of infection should avoid becoming pregnant because infection can be transmitted from infected mother to unborn or newly born child. (vii) Blood and blood products should be thoroughly investigated for the absence of HIV infection.

(viii) Avoid blood donation from strangers and professional donors. (ix) Hair cutting saloons should ensure that barber's razor is properly cleaned. (x) Piercing of nose, ear lobes or tattooing carry a risk of HIV transmission therefore instruments used for this purpose should be thoroughly sterilized. (xi) Impart health education to the public to enable them to make life-saving choices (e. g. avoiding indiscriminate sex, using condom etc.).

AIDS is quite common in western countries because of the undesirable sexual practices, polygamy and polyandry. In India also AIDS is increasing at an alarming rate. The most unfortunate part is that no medicine or vaccine has been developed so far which can prevent or cure AIDS. Therefore once a person gets AIDS he is sure to die in a short span of life that is why it is labeled as ' AIDS the other name of Death'.