

# What for the rest of your life, and

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What is HIV? HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks a cell in your body called CD4 T cell, which is an important part of the body immune system that protects the body and fights against the infections. And as our bodies can't get rid of this virus, once you get it it'll stay there for the rest of your life, and can eventually lead to the last stage of the HIV infection that's known as AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

Until today, there is no effective drug or treatment for the HIV virus. The main idea of all the HIV treatments is to prolong the patient's life and control the symptoms but it is unable to get rid of the virus completely. So as we can see HIV is a serious disease that can ruin people's lives and so we should be too aware of it and try to prevent its transmission as much as possible.

How does the HIV transmit? The first step to prevent HIV infections is by knowing the ways of this virus transmission. HIV can be transmitted generally by three ways: sexual contact, from a mother to the fetus during pregnancy, and through blood. This includes sharing needles to inject drugs and any other sharp objects that may expose you to the HIV infected person's blood, and of course blood transfusion. Thus, we make sure in the blood bank to exclude the HIV infected people and who are at risk of getting HIV from donating by a process called donor selection. What is donor selection? It is a process to determine whether the individual is suitable to donate blood or not depending on the donation criteria and conditions, those include the age, weight, general health, medical history and the present of any diseases, especially the diseases that can be transmitted through the blood. One of those is the HIV. Donor selection process starts with several questions including questions about HIV to exclude any donors with HIV permanently or

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at high risk of HIV temporarily. Those include if the person has AIDS symptoms, sex partner with AIDS, homosexual or bisexual people, having multiple sex partners, drug abuse now or in the past, visiting of other countries with a high percentage of HIV infected people.

What is the purpose of blood donor selection? The main goal of any blood bank is to provide safe blood products. The first step for that is the donor selection. By performing those procedures, we can protect both the donor and the recipient by only taking blood from healthy donors and providing safe blood eventually for the patient.

In addition, The WHO Global Database on Blood Safety indicates that every year in 164 countries there are more than 92 million blood donations. However, from those units, there are 1.6 million units discarded due to infectious diseases including HIV. So by good donor selection, we can avoid or reduce wasting this much of resources, consumables, for tests, donor's blood, and both donor and staff time that result from collecting unsuitable donations.