**HIV: What You Need to Know**

**What is HIV?**

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body’s immune system.

**Basic Facts**

- The HIV epidemic began in the 1980’s
- If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome)
- About **1.2 million people** are living with HIV in the United States, but **13%** are undiagnosed and unaware of their status
- Everyone aged **13 to 64** should be tested at least once in their lifetime
- **HIV** treatment has come a long way
- AIDS deaths have dropped, but the number of new **HIV** infections hasn’t

Source: cdc.gov
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How it Spreads
Most people who get HIV get it through anal or vaginal sex, or sharing needles, syringes, or other drug-injection equipment.

Symptoms
- Most people have flu-like symptoms within 2 to 4 weeks after infection
- Symptoms generally last from a few days to several weeks
- Having these symptoms alone doesn’t mean you have HIV. Other illnesses can also cause similar symptoms.

Diagnosis & Treatment
The only way to know your HIV status is to get tested. Knowing your status gives you information that empowers you to keep you and your partner healthy.

Treatment with HIV medicines is called antiretroviral therapy (ART). People with HIV should start ART as soon as possible.

Prevention
You can protect yourself and others with specific preventive strategies, such as never sharing needles and using condoms the right way during all sexual encounters. There are also HIV prevention medicines such as, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Source: cdc.gov