







HIV Facts

International Statistics

The facts

-  There are over 38 million people living with HIV and AIDS worldwide.
-  Since AIDS was first identified over 20 years ago, more than 20 million people have died.
-  There are more than 15 million children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS.
-  Worldwide almost half of those infected by HIV are women.
-  In some of the worst affected countries in sub-Saharan Africa rates of HIV infection are as high as one in three.







Further information

UNAIDS website - www.unaids.org

AVERT website - www.avert.org

UK Statistics

The facts

-  There are more than 70,000 people living with HIV in the UK.
-  There are around 1,200 young people under 18 infected in the UK.
-  1 in 3 people in the UK who are HIV positive do not know that they are infected.
-  At least 20,000 children live in a family affected by HIV.
-  Approximately 300 people die every year from illnesses related to their HIV infection.
-  Around 7,000 people are diagnosed with HIV each year, so the number of people living with HIV in the UK is growing year-on-year. In 2005 the highest ever number of new diagnoses in the UK was recorded. Final figures for 2006 were not available at the time of publication, but the latest statistics can be found at www.worldaidsday.org.

Further information

Health Protection Agency website - www.hpa.org.uk

National AIDS Trust's HIV information website - www.hiv.uk.com



HIV Facts

What are HIV and AIDS?

HIV stands for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV attacks the body's immune system - the body's defence against diseases.



AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. A person is considered to have AIDS when the immune system has become so weak that it can no longer fight off a whole range of diseases with which it would normally cope. If HIV is diagnosed late, people are more likely to develop AIDS.

How HIV is transmitted






The facts

HIV is passed on from one person to another via body fluids – blood, semen, pre-ejaculate (pre-cum), vaginal fluids and breast milk.







In the UK today, the main routes of transmission are:

-  through vaginal or anal sex without a condom
-  by sharing needles and other drug injecting equipment.

Less commonly, HIV is passed on through:

-  oral sex (particularly if someone has ulcers or gum problems or has recently brushed or flossed their teeth)
-  mother-to-baby transmission, although with the right medical interventions there is a 1-in-100 chance of this happening
-  breast feeding (where the mother is HIV positive)
-  accidents in a healthcare setting (needle-stick injuries)
-  tattooing – where dirty needles or makeshift equipment are used.

You can not get HIV from everyday activities including:

-  hugging, kissing or holding hands
-  sharing a bath
-  from a swimming pool
-  from a toilet seat
-  sharing cutlery or drinks with someone else
-  by someone spitting at you or biting you.



HIV Facts

People most affected by HIV in the UK

The facts

HIV can infect anyone but within the UK some communities have higher rates of infection, particularly gay and bisexual men and Black African men and women.

There are now more straight people than gay and bisexual men living with HIV but because many people, particularly Africans, were infected outside the UK, the majority of people who become infected here are gay men.

The reality is that people in the UK of all ages and from all sorts of background and ethnic groups are becoming infected with HIV and the number is growing.

It is important to remember that HIV is not a 'gay disease' or 'African disease' - there may be a young person in your class who is HIV positive or who has a family member who is infected.

Further information

Health Protection Agency website - www.hpa.org.uk

HIV treatment

The facts

There is no cure for HIV but since 1995 there have been drugs available to treat it.

Treatment for HIV is known as anti-retroviral therapy (ART). Treatments are often quite complicated – for example requiring a number of different drugs which have to be taken at different times - and don't always work. It can also be difficult to find the right combination for an individual and forgetting to take treatment at the right time can result in complications and drug-resistance.

ART can be very effective. However most HIV drugs also have side-effects ranging from diarrhoea, nausea and prolonged headaches to changes in body shape, depression and other mental health issues.

Further information

National AIDS Manual website - www.nam.org.uk



HIV Facts

Living with HIV in the UK





The facts

People living with HIV in the UK continue to experience prejudice and discrimination which for many people is more difficult than living with the physical effects of HIV.

Stigma and discrimination is often the result of ignorance about how HIV is passed on and unfounded fear about becoming infected.

Because of the communities in the UK who are most affected, HIV-related discrimination is often exacerbated by homophobia, racism or negative attitudes towards immigrants and asylum seekers.

People living with HIV report experiencing stigma and discrimination most frequently:

-  in the workplace
-  in the NHS – particularly amongst healthcare workers who aren't HIV specialists (e.g. GPs and dentists)
-  in the media – where reporting of HIV is often inaccurate and misleading and fuels existing prejudices
-  amongst family and friends.



Today's young people are the employers, politicians, doctors, nurses, policy-makers and journalists of the future – making sure that they understand the facts about HIV and the impact stigma and discrimination has on people living with HIV can make a real difference in the long term.

Further information

National AIDS Trust website – www.nat.org.uk/Stigma_And_Discrimination

World AIDS Day and the red ribbon

The facts

-  World AIDS Day (WAD) is on 1 December. World AIDS Day was the very first international health day.
-  World AIDS Day was started by the World Health Organisation in 1988, in recognition of the need for a global response to addressing the HIV pandemic.
-  The red ribbon is the universally recognised symbol of HIV and is inextricably linked to WAD.
-  The red ribbon has been an international symbol of HIV awareness since 1991 when it was created by a group of US-based artists as a symbol of support for the growing number of people living with HIV.
-  Throughout the nineties many celebrities wore red ribbons, encouraged in the UK by Princess Diana's high profile support for HIV.
-  The red ribbon is worn across the world as a sign of support for people living with HIV.
-  Wearing a red ribbon is a simple and powerful way to challenge the stigma and prejudice surrounding HIV and AIDS that prevents us from tackling the global epidemic.

Further information

World AIDS Day website – www.worldaidsday.org

World AIDS Campaign website - www.worldaidscampaign.org