

HIV Facts

International Statistics

-  There are over 36 million people living with HIV worldwide. One reason why this figure is increasing is because more people are accessing life-saving HIV medication, which means more and more people are living longer and healthier lives.
-  In 2014, 1.2 million people died of AIDS-related illness. This is a decline of 42% since 2004.
-  Between 2000 and 2014, new HIV infections dropped from 3.1 million to 2 million, a reduction of 35%.
-  However, in some of the worst affected countries in sub-Saharan Africa, rates of HIV infection are still as high as 1 in 3.
-  New HIV infections among children were 58% lower in 2014 than they were in 2000, due to an increase in the number of pregnant women who now have access to HIV medication.
-  Overall, about half of those infected by HIV worldwide, are women.

Further information: [UNAIDS website - www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)

UK Statistics

-  There are over 103,000 people living with HIV in the UK. However, in 2014 only 85,489 people were receiving HIV care.
-  This is partly because approximately 17% of people living with HIV in the UK do not know they have the virus.
-  About 6,000 people are diagnosed with HIV in the UK each year. HIV medication now enables people to live long and healthy lives, therefore, the number of people living with HIV in the UK is increasing year-on-year.
-  In the UK, an estimated 20,000 children live in a family affected by HIV.

Further information: [Public Health England website - www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)
[NAT website - www.nat.org.uk](http://www.nat.org.uk)

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. Because of effective treatments, most people living with HIV in the UK will not go on to develop AIDS.

How is HIV transmitted?

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 injecting equipment or needles for injecting drugs or tattooing.

Less commonly, HIV is passed on through:

-  oral sex (if the person performing oral sex 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 less than 1-in-100 chance of this happening
-  breast feeding (where the mother is HIV positive).

HIV is not passed on by:

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

For more information on HIV transmission visit www.HIVaware.org.uk

HIV Facts

People most affected by HIV in the UK

In the UK HIV disproportionately affects gay and bisexual men and black African men and women. In 2013, the overall prevalence of HIV among the general population amounted to 1 in every 357 people.

However, among gay and bisexual men it was 1 in 20, and among black African heterosexual men and women it was 1 in 56 and 1 in 22 respectively.

New HIV diagnoses among gay and bisexual men are increasing, and in 2014 the highest number of new diagnoses was recorded. This reflects both continued high levels of HIV transmission and an increase in HIV testing. Between 2003 and 2013 new diagnoses of HIV doubled among gay and bisexual men aged 16 to 24.

New HIV diagnoses among black African men and women are declining. This is partly due to a reduction in the number of individuals migrating from Africa to the UK.

However, HIV is not something that just affects gay and bisexual men or African men and women. The reality is that people in the UK of all ages and from all ethnic groups and backgrounds are at risk from contracting HIV.

It is important to remember that there may be a young person in your class who is HIV positive or who has a family member who is living with HIV and they could be from any background. There are around 1,000 children and young people accessing HIV care in the UK who contracted HIV during pregnancy or birth.

However, with effective treatment through pregnancy and birth, less than 0.5% of children born to HIV positive mothers will contract HIV.

Further information: Public Health England website - www.hpa.org.uk
HIV Aware - www.HIVaware.org.uk

HIV Treatment

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). Most people starting treatment for the first time now take just one or two pills a day, but treatments can be quite complicated. For some people, particularly those diagnosed some time ago, it can be difficult to find the right combination of drugs and forgetting to take treatment at the right time can result in complications and drug-resistance.

ART is now very effective. However, some people experience side-effects such as diarrhoea, nausea and depression.

Further information: HIV Aware - www.HIVaware.org.uk
NAM - www.aidsmap.com

HIV Facts

Living with HIV in the UK

Some people living with HIV in the UK still experience prejudice and discrimination which can be more difficult than living with the physical effects of HIV.

Stigma and discrimination are 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: [NAT website – www.nat.org.uk](http://www.nat.org.uk)

HIV Facts

World AIDS Day and the red ribbon

-  World AIDS Day 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 World AIDS Day.
-  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 1990s many celebrities wore red ribbons, encouraged in the UK by Princess Diana's high profile support for people living with 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 that prevents us from tackling the global epidemic. It also shows support for people living with HIV.

Further information: World AIDS Day website – www.worldaidsday.org