

RISKY BEHAVIOUR

In North America, only gay or bisexual people acquire AIDS FALSE

Any behaviour which includes the exchange of infected body fluids, whether between homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual individuals, carries the risk of transmitting AIDS. Blood transfusion before 1985, when testing was begun, could transmit the virus; I.V. drug abusers who share needles are also at risk.

Any exchange of bodily fluids (particularly blood, semen, or vaginal secretion) during sex is to be considered risky.

So when participating in any sexual activity, consider the following:

- Use a condom when involved in vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex (fellatio). Even the pre-ejaculatory fluid from the male's Cowper's glands may contain the virus.

- Dry kissing is a non-risk activity, while "French" kissing, which involves inserting the tongue into your partner's mouth, creates an exchange of saliva and should be considered at least a low-risk activity, since HIV has been found in saliva.

- Mutual masturbation, body massage and body-to-body rubbing are all considered safe.

- Oral sex (cunnilingus) is a low-risk activity. Vaginal secretions can carry HIV and if ingested could reach the bloodstream through cuts, wounds, or abrasions in the mouth.

- Inserting the fingers or tongue into the anus cavity should be considered risky. Even well-scrubbed hands will often have slight cuts and abrasions that could permit the transmission of the virus.

- Urine is another bodily fluid in which the virus has been found. Do not drink urine.

- Never share unsterilized sex toys such as dildos and vibrators, which may cause cuts or abrasions.

- Any sexual activity that might involve blood exposure such as S/M is high risk. Direct contact with blood should be considered high risk.

Remember: AIDS does not have to mean the end of sex. Safer sex guidelines will only work if they are widely known and practised. Talk openly with your friends and sexual partners about safer sex and identify the risk factors accordingly. The following is a list of sexual activities that are considered to be **no risk, low risk, moderate risk and high risk.**

No Risk

- mutual masturbation
- social "dry" kissing
- hugging
- massaging
- body-to-body contact where there are no breaks or abrasions to the skin.

Low Risk

- cunnilingus (oral-vaginal contact)
- "French" kissing — inserting the tongue into a partner's mouth
- vaginal or anal intercourse using a condom (spermicides further reduce the risk)
- fellatio (oral sex); inserting the penis into the mouth and not allowing semen to enter

Moderate Risk

- fellatio (oral sex); receiving the penis in the mouth and swallowing the semen
- inserting the penis in the vagina or the anus without the use of a condom
- inserting the hands or tongue into the anus cavity

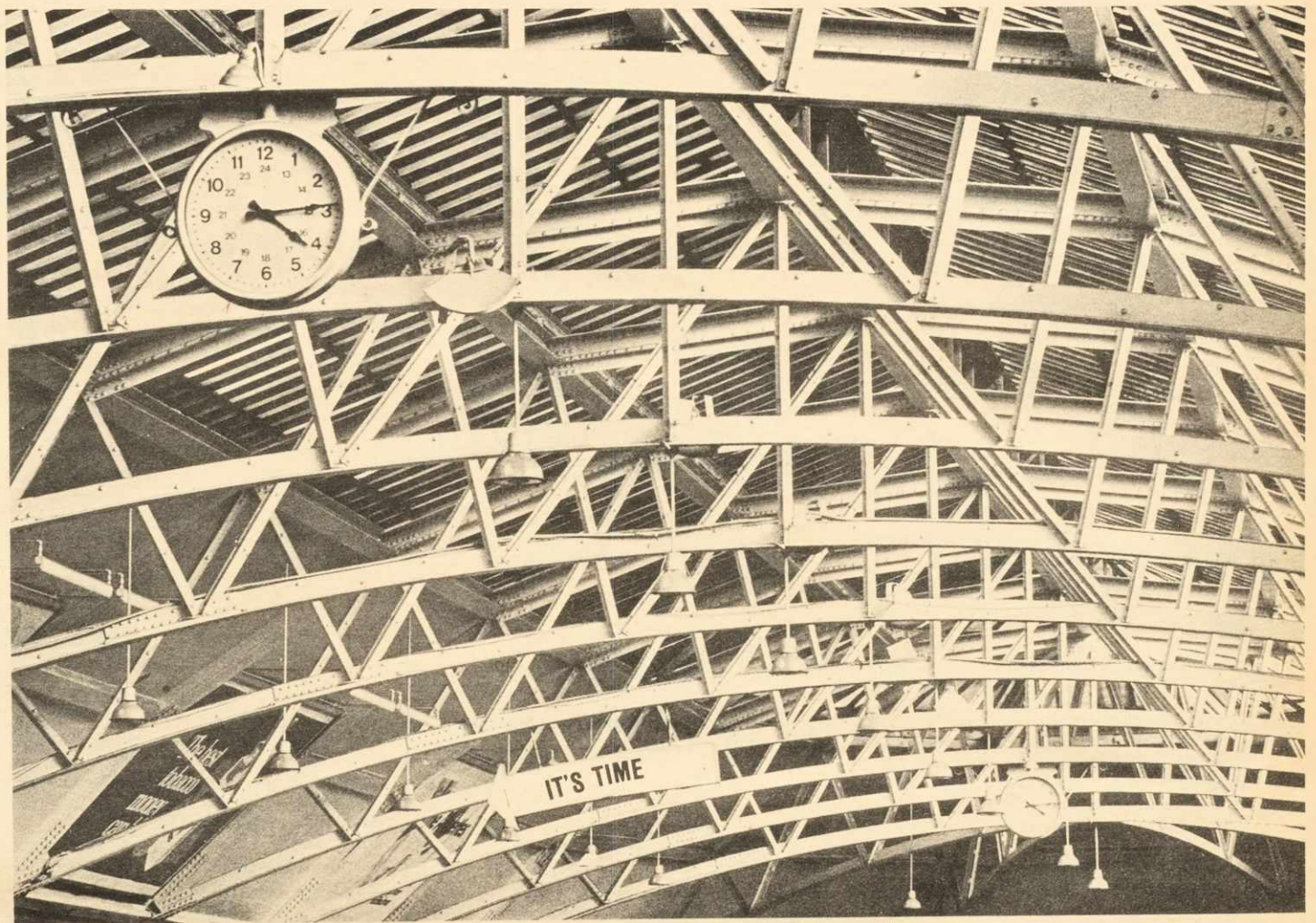
High Risk

- receiving the penis vaginally or anally without using a condom
- sharing sex toys such as dildos or vibrators
- S/M (sadoomasochistic practices)

Following are the answers to the questions posed in the Risky Behaviour section of the questionnaire.

Anal intercourse without using a condom:

to the man who inserts his penis in his partner's anus **moderate risk**
to the partner who receives the penis **high risk**
The anal mucosa (lining) is much more



fragile than the skin of the penis and the virus can easily be transmitted through lacerations and breaks.

Vaginal intercourse without using a condom:

to the woman **high risk**
to the man **moderate risk**

The seminal fluid of a man who is HIV positive is highly contagious. It has been suggested that when ejaculated in the woman's vagina, the virus can easily enter the bloodstream through openings in the genital tract.

There is less risk to the male if his female partner is infected because the intact skin of the penis partially prevents entry of the virus. If there are breaks or cuts in the skin, however, these provide entryways for infection.

Having a partner ejaculate in your mouth

..... **moderate risk**
The lining of the mouth, if it is unbroken, will not permit the HI virus to enter the circulation. However, even small breaks in the mucosa will allow infection to occur.

Swallowing semen

..... **moderate risk**
The semen of men with AIDS is laden with the virus and if there is a break in the lining of the gastro-intestinal tract, it can pass into the blood.

Mutual masturbation (masturbating each other)

..... **no risk**
There is no risk provided neither partner has cuts, abrasions, exzema, etc., through which ejaculated virus-containing fluid could enter the system.

Anal intercourse using a condom:

to the man who inserts his penis **low risk**
to the partner who receives the penis **low risk**

Provided the condom is intact and remains intact, there is little risk of infection — as long as there is no fluid transfer, there will be no contagion.

Care must be taken when the condom is

removed so no semen is accidentally spilled.

Vaginal intercourse using a condom:

to the woman **low risk**
to the man **low risk**

Provided the condom is intact and remains intact, there is little risk of infection — as long as there is no fluid transfer there will be no contagion.

Again, care must be taken that pre-ejaculate is not present *before* the condom is put in place and that semen is contained when the condom is removed.

Sharing unsterilized sex toys

..... **high risk**
Shared sex toys can carry bodily fluids, both blood and semen, containing the virus from one person to another and can spread AIDS.

Anal-oral contact (analingus)

to the partner who makes oral contact **moderate risk**

to the partner who receives oral contact **low risk**

There is only risk if the lining of the mouth has breaks, cuts or ulcers through which infection can spread to broken skin and into the partner's blood. Nevertheless, other organisms could be transmitted through this practice.

Unprotected intercourse with many partners

..... **high risk**
Most efficient way to spread AIDS — unimpeded exchange of body fluid with many partners about whom you may know little.

Unprotected intercourse with someone who has many partners

..... **high risk**
Most efficient way to spread AIDS — unimpeded exchange of body fluid with your partner.

REFERENCES:

New York Department of Health. (1988) *100 Questions and Answers About AIDS* New York Department of Health.

You may think you know all the answers. So did we and we were wrong. Take a few minutes to see just what you do know. Ignorance is this disease's best friend.

Greig, J.D. (1987) *AIDS: What Every Responsible Canadian Should Know*. Toronto: Toronto Sun Publishing Corporation. (The Canadian Public Health Association)

Centres for Disease Control. (1988) Update.