

Aids is the disease of the nineties. By now you probably know that aids stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The virus that causes aids is HIV. (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus) This virus attacks the immune system. The result of this attack renders victims powerless to fight off disease.

How serious is AIDS?

Very serious.

Canada has one of the highest rates of infection in the developed world. The epidemic has spread rapidly, and it is estimated that 50,000 Canadians are now infected with HIV.

By 1993 more than 7,000 people with HIV infection in Canada will have AIDS.

Worldwide, there are 5-10 million people infected with HIV. Of these, 600,000 have already developed AIDS, the most severe stage of the infection.

The AIDS picture in Canada

AIDS cases reported to date by geographic area:

	Total #	Rate per Million Population
Yukon Territory	1	39
North-West Territory	2	38
British Columbia	689	226
City of Vancouver	687	
Alberta	220	91
Saskatchewan	32	32
Manitoba	44	41
Ontario	1450	152
City of Toronto	773	
Quebec	976	146
City of Montreal	831	
Nova Scotia	57	64
New Brunswick	20	28
Prince Edward Island	3	23
Newfoundland	15	26

To date, people who have developed AIDS in Canada have become infected by the following activities:

	Number	%
Men who have sex with other men	2786	79.4
Sharing needles or syringes to inject drugs	34	1.0
Both of the above	104	3.0
Recipients of blood or blood products	187	5.3
Heterosexual sex	246	7.0
Children born to an infected mother	42	1.2
Insufficient information	110	3.1
TOTAL	3,509	

(Statistical Source: The Federal Centre for AIDS, Feb. 5'90)

Condoms for Couples

Couples today need to know about AIDS and about condoms. Condoms (rubbers) stop AIDS. AIDS is spread by sex (vaginal, anal or oral) without condoms. Men can get it from women. Women can get it from men. You can prevent

AIDS. Always use condoms. Remember! Condoms are not 100% perfect. But if you use them properly, they are very effective.

But I feel awkward with them. How do I use condoms? They're not hard to use, but practice helps! Play with a few. Stretch them to see how strong they are. Practice by yourself and with each other. It's fun for her to put the condom on him. **How can I start talking about using condoms?** One way is to bring up the subject with your partner when AIDS is in the news. You can talk about its effect on sex in the 1980s, and how more and more people are using condoms. Or, you can talk about caring for each other and having fun safely. Or, you can show your partner this article. **When should I talk to my partner?** Set your own limits first.. Then talk to your partner before you have sex and before you're both hot.. Pick a time when you can both relax.



Which condoms should I use? Find condoms you both like. Any latex condom will stop the AIDS virus. Try different brands and different kinds (lubricated/dry, ribbed/smooth, etc.). **Here are some "how to's"...** When the penis is hard, squeeze the air from the tip of the condom. This leaves a space for semen. Hold the tip as you unroll the condom. Make sure there's no air inside. Air bubbles are the biggest reason why condoms break. The second biggest reason why condoms break is not enough lubrication: use plenty. Birth control foam and jelly give extra protection: they contain the spermicide nonoxynol-9 which kills the AIDS virus. **Never** use oil-based lubricants such as Vaseline, hand lotion, or massage oil - they weaken latex and make condoms break. After... don't lose the condom or spill it. Hold on to the ring at the end of the condom as he withdraws. **Never** reuse a condom. Keep extra condoms around so you don't run out.

It's okay to keep condoms in your wallet for an evening, but no longer.. Body heat damages the condoms over time.

ALWAYS USE CONDOMS

Information on AIDS antibody-testing from AIDS New Brunswick

WHAT DOES A POSITIVE TEST RESULT MEAN? If you test positive, it means that antibodies to the AIDS virus have been found in your blood. Remember - a positive test result tells you only that you have been exposed to the AIDS virus at some point.. - It does not mean that you have AIDS or an AIDS-related illness. - It does not tell you whether in future you will get ill or remain healthy - It does not mean you are immune to AIDS. - It does mean you should practice safer sex. It's important for other people because you may be able to pass on the virus. And it's important for you because being exposed more than once could increase your chances of getting ill in the future.

the AIDS virus isn't in you system. You should still take precautions to prevent exposing others, and to avoid being exposed in the future if you are not now.

HOW CAN A PERSON BE EXPOSED TO THE VIRUS?

The most common way the AIDS virus is transmitted is through sexual activity in which the semen or blood of one person enters the bloodstream of another. This can happen in vaginal or anal intercourse without a condom, in oral sex on a man when there is ejaculation, in oral sex on a woman during her period, and while sharing sex toys. Drug users who share needles or syringes risk being exposed. Infected blood can be passed from one person to another this way. Women who carry the virus may expose unborn children in pregnancy or childbirth, or may transmit it during breastfeeding. People who received a blood donation between 1979 and November 1985 run a very small risk of having been infected. Since November 1985 the Red Cross has been screening all blood donations to find infected blood and make sure it is not used.

Transmission of the AIDS virus does not occur in day-to-day social situations. You can not be exposed to AIDS through sneezing, sharing a drinking glass, swimming in a public pool, sitting on a toilet seat, dry kissing, or hugging a person with AIDS.

The AIDS antibody test cannot tell us which people with a positive result will get sick and which ones will remain healthy.

HOW CAN I PREVENT AIDS?

In sexual encounters, condoms that are properly used can prevent the transmission of the AIDS virus. As well, during sex you should not allow the semen, blood, urine or feces of one sexual partner to enter the body of another sexual partner. If you use drugs, never share needles or syringes. It doesn't matter whether the needle goes into a vein or just under the skin. If you are in a group that is at a higher risk for AIDS or if you have tested positive for the antibody, you should not donate blood. If you're worried about speaking up in a situation like a blood drive. If you're worried about speaking up in a situation like a blood drive, just say you are not feeling well or have taken medication and you will not be allowed to give blood. If you cannot avoid donating call the Red Cross Centre nursing department as soon as possible and request that your blood not be used for transfusions. Protect yourself: maintain your health. If you have been exposed to the virus, proper rest, nutrition, and reducing stress could help prevent AIDS from developing in the future.



A negative test result does not guarantee that