

**GIB AIDS  
KEINE  
CHANCE**

**BZgA**

Bundeszentrale  
für  
gesundheitliche  
Aufklärung

# HIV transmission and AIDS risk

What is – and isn't – a risk

Situations/risks/advice

Englische Ausgabe „HIV-Übertragung und Aids-Gefahr“



There is no vaccine against HIV. But there is a simple and effective way of protecting yourself from infection: **a condom will protect you!** It's important to know when you need to protect yourself and when you do not run any risk of infection.

## In brief: the risks

You can be **infected** if blood, semen or vaginal fluids enter your bloodstream. This happens if you share a hypodermic syringe **and especially if you have unprotected sex.**

An HIV-positive mother can infect her **baby in the womb**, during delivery or while breastfeeding. The risk from **blood products** and blood transfusions has been reduced to a very low level in Germany.

When you **travel** to other countries, you must remember that the quality of health care may be variable. If you have any doubts, ask for instruments to be sterilized and for tested blood products only to be used.

In many countries outside Europe, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STI) are much more common than they are here. And **condoms** are not always of the quality we are used to. So take a good supply with you.

Condoms should only be used with non-oil-based lubricants. Oil, grease, lotions, creams and Vaseline will damage the condom. And condoms are vulnerable to heat.

People in different life situations have a very different risk of HIV. This little brochure will give you a short overview. To make it easier, the situations, risks and advice described in the pages below are marked in different colours:

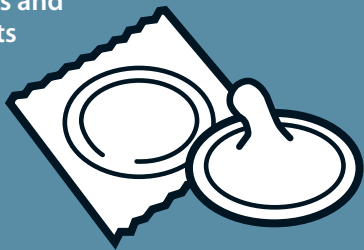


**HIGH RISK**

**LOW RISK**

**NO RISK**

## Condoms and lubricants



### **BEWARE!!!**

Condoms protect you from HIV. When buying, check the quality of the condom. Quality-assured condoms have the CE or DLF mark on the packaging. Look for the use-by date on the packaging as well.

If you use a lubricant, you should make sure that it is non-oil-based. Oil, grease, lotions, creams or Vaseline will damage the condom and may make it split. You should use only water-based or oil-free lubricants which are specially designed for use with condoms.

## Anal sex without a condom



**Very high risk.** Anal sex (where the penis enters the back passage) without a condom is risky for both partners. It is particularly risky for the passive partner, both men and women. It is risky even if ejaculation does not take place.

**▣ We say:** use a condom and plenty of non-oil-based lubricant for anal sex.

## Vaginal sex without a condom



**Very high risk.** Vaginal sex (where the penis enters the vagina) without a condom carries a high risk of infection.

**We say:** use a condom for vaginal sex.

## Pregnancy in an HIV-positive woman



**High risk to the baby.** An HIV-positive mother can infect her baby before and during birth and afterwards (i.e. through breastfeeding). However, comprehensive medical care and treatment with HIV drugs can reduce the risk to the baby enormously. We recommend that all women and their partners take an HIV test if they want a baby and cannot exclude the possibility of HIV infection.

**» We say:** talk to your doctor as early as possible.

## Sharing syringes and needles



**Very high risk.** If several people use the same needle and syringe, they are at very high risk.

- ☐ **We say:** always keep sterile needles and syringes for your own personal use. Don't share needles and syringes with other people.



## Oral sex (Sex using the mouth – man or woman)



**Low risk.** The risk of contracting HIV during oral sex is low, provided that no semen or blood get into the mouth.

**We say:** don't get semen or blood in your mouth.

## Kissing and French kissing



**Kissing is not risky.** There is a theoretical risk of infection with French kissing, but worldwide it has not been shown to be a way of transmitting the infection.

## Physical and skin-to-skin contact



**No risk** from skin-to-skin or physical contact, such as shaking hands, fondling or petting.

## Family and social life



**No risk.** No one can get infected in this way, even by living with a person with HIV in the family home or sharing an apartment.

## Transmission through the air



**No risk.** And you can't get infected with HIV through coughs or sneezes.

## Food and restaurants



**No risk.**

## Crockery, clothing, laundry



**No risk.** There is no risk from using the same crockery. Nor do you need to wash the clothes or bedlinen of people with HIV separately.

Swimming pool,  
sauna, toilets,  
washrooms



**No risk.** HIV cannot be passed on when using these community facilities.



## Doctor, dentist, hospital



**No risk** from medical procedures, provided that you follow the usual **rules of hygiene** (i.e. using disposable equipment and thoroughly sterilized instruments).

With **donated blood and plasma**, there is still a – very small – risk of infection, despite the very effective precautionary measures used. For this reason, you are recommended to use your own blood, donated in advance, when you have elective surgery. **Inactivated blood products**, provided that they are properly prepared, are practically guaranteed to be free of HIV.

## Hairdresser, tattooing, manicure, piercings and ear-piercing



**No risk**, provided that current **rules of hygiene** are observed. All piercing or cutting objects which come into contact with blood should be **used once only** or thoroughly **sterilized**.

- ☐ **We say:** ensure that piercing, tattoos or ear-piercing are done only by professionals.

## Insect bites



No risk.

You can get personalized advice, while staying anonymous, from the telephone helpline run by the Federal Centre for Health Education:

**☎ 0221 892031, [www.aidsberatung.de](http://www.aidsberatung.de)**

If you have any other questions, e.g. about **HIV testing**, you can get detailed, personalized advice from your **local health authority**, the charity **AIDS-Hilfe** or **other AIDS advisory centres**. You don't need to give your name. Most of the counselling services mentioned here are only available in German.

You can obtain **free information materials** from:

Federal Centre for Health Education (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung), 51101 Cologne  
Fax: 0221 8992-257

E-mail: **[order@bzga.de](mailto:order@bzga.de)**

[www.bzga.de](http://www.bzga.de)

[www.gib-aids-keine-chance.de](http://www.gib-aids-keine-chance.de)

and from

Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe e.V. (DAH) (German AIDS Service Organizations)

Wilhelmstraße 138, 10963 Berlin

E-mail: **[dah@aidshilfe.de](mailto:dah@aidshilfe.de)**

[www.aidshilfe.de](http://www.aidshilfe.de)

This brochure is available in the following languages:

German	Order No.: 70280000
English	Order No.: 70280070
French	Order No.: 70280080
Russian	Order No.: 70280110
Turkish	Order No.: 70280060

Black-and-white copies of "HIV transmission and AIDS risk" are available on the Internet in 29 languages from [www.gib-aids-keine-chance.de](http://www.gib-aids-keine-chance.de).

An overview of BZgA materials on AIDS prevention is available under order number 70950000.

### **Publication information:**

Published by the Federal Centre for Health Information (BZgA), Cologne on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Health, and funded by the Federal Republic of Germany

Translation: Teresa Lander, UK

All rights reserved.

Revised edition, April 2014

8.10.05.14

Printer: Ollig, Köln

**Order No.: 70280070**

This brochure is distributed free of charge by BZgA, 51101 Cologne. It is not intended for resale by the recipient or any third party.

## **Impressum:**

Herausgegeben von der Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung, Köln, im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Gesundheit, gefördert durch die Bundesrepublik Deutschland

Übersetzung: Teresa Lander, UK

Alle Rechte vorbehalten.

Aktualisierte Auflage, April 2014

8.10.05.14

Druck: Ollig, Köln

**Best.-Nr.: 70280070**

Diese Broschüre wird von der BZgA, 51101 Köln, kostenlos abgegeben. Sie ist nicht zum Weiterverkauf durch die Empfängerin oder den Empfänger oder durch Dritte bestimmt.

BZgA telephone helpline:

**0221 892031**

For more information:

**[www.gib-aids-keine-chance.de](http://www.gib-aids-keine-chance.de)**