

HIV

FACT

BOOK

For Key Populations



WHAT IS HIV?

- HIV stands for 'Human Immunodeficiency Virus', a virus that is passed from person to person through bodily fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal secretions, anal secretions, and breast milk.
- Once a person is diagnosed with HIV, it stays in their body for life. However, Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) is available at all clinics and slows or stops the increase of the HIV virus thereby prolonging life. There is currently no cure for HIV.
- It is important that one takes ARVs as advised by their health provider for effective management of HIV.

WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS stands for 'Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome' and develops when HIV weakens a person's immune system enough that their body is no longer able to protect itself against infections referred to as opportunistic infections.

HOW DOES ONE GET INFECTED WITH HIV?

- There are only a handful of activities that put a person at risk of contracting HIV.
- These activities include: unprotected anal or vaginal sex, sharing needles, razor blades and syringes, sharing and/or direct blood to blood contact with a HIV positive person.
- HIV can also be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy, delivery, and breastfeeding if the mother is not on ART.
- People are not at risk of contracting HIV if they hug or kiss someone, or share cups, drink bottles or other house hold utensils.



HIV RISKS AMONG HETEROSEXUAL PERSONS

- Vaginal sexual intercourse is the most common route of HIV transmission among heterosexual couples (man & woman). This risk is further increased if the couple practices anal sexual intercourse.
- Heterosexual persons who have many sexual partners at the same time are at a higher risk of being infected with HIV or spreading HIV. Thus, it is important to always use a condom and water based lubricants or stick to one sexual partner.





- Research has shown that men who have sex with men are more likely to get HIV than heterosexual men.
- Anal sex has the highest risk for HIV transmission. There are two reasons for this; first, there are more cells prone to HIV in the anal wall than the vagina wall. Second, both semen and anal secretions contain more HIV than vaginal fluid.
- The number of available sexual partners is relatively small among men who have sex with men and this allows HIV and other STI's to spread quicker.

HIV RISK AMONG SEX WORKERS

- Female and male sex workers are more likely to become infected with HIV due to lack of consistent condom use and having multiple clients (partners).
- Sex workers are likely to have sex without a condom due to poor negotiation skills for safer sex.
- Clients may also offer more money for unprotected sex, a proposal that may be difficult to refuse.



- Female sex workers who practice dry sex increase their risk of contracting HIV and other STIs due to increased bruising of the vaginal wall.
- Adolescent sex workers are more at risk of contracting HIV due to their vulnerability.

HIV RISK AMONG INJECTING DRUG USERS



- HIV risk among injecting drug users arises mainly through sharing needles, syringes and injecting devices.
- If a needle has been used by an HIV positive person, infected blood in the needle can be transferred into the next person who uses that needle.
- Due to the cost of injecting drugs there is an overlap between drug use and sex work to meet the cost of the drugs and fulfil the addiction.

METHODS OF HIV PREVENTION



CONDOMS

Condoms are the best and most inexpensive way to protect against contracting HIV when used consistently and correctly. Condoms also protect from exposure to STIs.



PREP

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is HIV medication that prevents an HIV negative person from being infected. PrEP does not protect from other STIs so condoms should still be used.



LUBES

Couples who practice anal sex should use condoms in addition with lubricants to stop the condom from ripping and minimise bruising. Women who experience vaginal dryness should also use lubes.



NEP

Providing Needle Exchange Programmes (NEP) as part of social and health services in combination with rehabilitation will minimise the spread of HIV among people who inject drugs.



START

SAFE

STAY

SAFE

GETTING TESTED FOR HIV



- HIV testing is available at all public health facilities in Zambia for free. Testing and results are confidential and no one is allowed to disclose your status without your consent.
- HIV Self-testing kits are available to the public. You can take a self-test for HIV on your own and in the comfort of your home without walking into a health facility.
- The frequency of testing depends on who you have sex with and what type of sex you have.
- Testing for HIV and other STIs is recommended once a year for anyone who is sexually active.
- The more partners you have, the more often you should test for HIV and other STIs.



“ENDING HIV AND
AIDS STARTS WITH
YOU AND ME.”

HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS?

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

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