

# HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS

## HIV

**HIV** is the virus that leads to AIDS. HIV destroy CD4 cells, which help the body fight off infection and disease. When you lose CD4 cells, your immune system breaks down, allowing you to get certain infections and cancers. When you have HIV infection and your CD4 cell count is less than 200, it is called AIDS, and you are less able to fight off disease. When a person gets HIV, it can take about 10 years before AIDS actually develop.

### CAUSES

HIV is spread through sexual contact; shared drug needles, or other situations where people are exposed to infected blood, semen, or vaginal secretions. To become infected with HIV, the blood, semen, or vaginal secretions must enter your body. HIV is not spread through:

- Public Restrooms
- Coughing or Sneezing
- Hugging or Touching Food or Water
- Shared work or School Space

### SYMPTOMS

- Persistent fever and night sweats
- Persistent fatigue
- Swollen lymph nodes
- unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite
- Prolonged diarrhea
- Recurrent respiratory infections, shortness of breath or dry cough

HIV is diagnosed by testing your blood for the presence of antibodies to the virus. HIV test aren't accurate immediately after infection, because it takes time for your body to develop these antibodies, usually from 6 to 12 weeks. In some cases it can take up to 6 months for an HIV antibody test to become positive.

There is no cure for HIV/AIDS, but medication can dramatically prolong the lives of people infected with HIV by slowing damage to the Immune System.

*"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto to God, which is your reasonable service" Romans 12:1*