

## What is HIV?

**HIV**, or the **H**uman **I**mmunodeficiency **V**irus, attacks your body's immune system so that your body cannot fight off diseases. When this happens, you can develop a disease called **AIDS**, or **A**cquired **I**mmuno**D**eficiency **S**yndrome. **HIV/AIDS** is a very serious disease, mostly because once HIV destroys your immune system, you can easily get other diseases that your body cannot fight.

There is no cure for HIV or AIDS but if diagnosed early on, there are medicines that can help you stay healthy.

## Are you at risk for HIV/AIDS?

Yes, everyone is at risk for HIV/AIDS:

**Babies & Children**

**Teenagers**

**Men & Women**

**Rich & Poor**

**Straight, Gay, &**

**Bisexual people**



You cannot tell if someone is **HIV-positive** (meaning that he/she has HIV) simply by looking at that person. But if someone has HIV/AIDS and doesn't know it, he or she can still pass the virus on to others. So if you're not sure if you have HIV, get tested as soon as possible! The only way to know for sure is by getting tested.

## How would I get HIV/AIDS?

**It's possible to get HIV/AIDS by:**

- Having unprotected sex (anal, oral or vaginal) with someone who has HIV/AIDS
- Using IV Drugs and sharing needles
- Sharing toothbrushes or razors

**It is NOT possible to get HIV/AIDS by:**

- Touching or hugging
- Sharing food with someone who has HIV/AIDS
- Getting insect bites
- Coughing or sneezing
- Dry kissing (kissing on the cheeks)

## How can I protect myself from HIV/AIDS?

**You can protect yourself by:**

- Not having sex (anal, oral or vaginal)
- Using a new latex condom or dental dam each time you have sex
- Not sharing needles, toothbrushes, or razor blades
- Knowing the HIV status of your partner
- Getting regular screening tests
- Getting more information on HIV/AIDS

## Additional Tips for Women

- Pregnant women who have HIV could pass it on to their babies
- If you decide to get pregnant, be sure to get tested for HIV first
- If you know you have HIV and are pregnant, talk to your doctor about how you can protect your baby

## Where can I be tested for HIV/AIDS?

All HIV testing and counseling is

**confidential** (meaning that this information stays private between you and your doctor).

If you want to be tested, you can ask your

PCP (doctor), call the **MetroPlus**

**Partnership in Care Program**, or go to any  
**NYC or NY State anonymous testing**  
**program.**

### If you are HIV-Positive:

- Use a condom or dental dam every time you have sex. A latex condom will help protect you and your partner, and will lower your risks for other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Talk with your doctor about HIV and your risk for other diseases, especially tuberculosis. Having HIV/AIDS causes you to be at higher risk for getting other diseases or infections.
- Take care of yourself. Be sure to eat a balanced diet and get plenty of rest.
- Ask your doctor about medicines that can help you stay healthy.
- See your PCP (doctor) regularly.



### Remember:

- Use a condom every time you have sex.
- You can have HIV and still feel healthy.
- Know the HIV status of your partner!
- Getting tested is the only way to know for sure if you have HIV/AIDS.

### For more information on HIV/AIDS, call:

N.Y.S. HIV/AIDS Information Hotline:

**1-800-541-2437**

National AIDS Hotline:

**1-800-342-2437 (English)**

**1-800-344-7432 (Español)**

MetroPlus Health Plan's HIV/AIDS

Partnership in Care Program:

**1-800-579-9798**

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your doctor. There may be variations in treatment that your doctor may recommend based on individual facts about you.

**MetroPlus Health Plan**  
**160 Water St. 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl, New York, NY 10038**  
**Member information:**  
**1-800-303-9626**  
**For information about MetroPlus Health Plan:**  
**1-800-475-METRO**

**www.MetroPlus.org**

**03/07 (ENG)**

# HIV/AIDS:

## What You Should Know



 **MetroPlus**  
Health Plan  
1-800-475-METRO  
WWW.METROPLUS.ORG