

HIV PREVENTION AND EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Go to knowmystatus.org to learn more about HIV, other STDs, and to find out where to go for HIV testing, support, and treatment in Texas.

More HIV and AIDS
information from DSHS:

dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/info/hiv

For STD testing locations in Texas, call:

2-1-1

For assistance with
substance use disorders:

samhsa.gov or **1-800-662-4357**



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

For HIV/STD questions, call
737-255-4300

or visit

dshs.texas.gov/hivstd

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WHY DO I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV)?

While HIV affects men more than women, 24,000 women in Texas lived with diagnosed HIV in 2024.

HIV spreads through contact with blood, breast milk, and other bodily fluids. Any person with HIV can pass the virus.

High-risk behaviors for catching HIV include:

- Any kind of unprotected sex with men or women.
- Sharing needles or syringes.

If you have or have had a sexually transmitted disease (STD), you face a higher risk of contracting HIV.

If left untreated, an HIV infection can lead to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), which leaves the body's immune system unable to fight other diseases and cancers.

WHAT SHOULD I SAY TO MY PARTNER(S)?

If you and your partner(s) currently engage in either of the high-risk behaviors listed above, you should discuss using condoms and getting tested for HIV with them.

Use these tips for talking to your partner(s):

- Practice what you will say with a friend or family member before talking to your partner(s).
- Talk with your partner(s) before engaging in sexual activity or drug use.
- Avoid accusations. Talk about testing and using condoms instead.
- Keep a supply of condoms in your purse or in a cool, dry place. Do not store condoms in your wallet.

If you worry your partner(s) may become angry or aggressive if you talk to them about using condoms or testing for HIV, call [1-800-799-7233](tel:1-800-799-7233) or text START to 88788 to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

I AM CURRENTLY PREGNANT OR PLANNING TO GET PREGNANT. HOW WILL HIV AFFECT MY PREGNANCY?

If untreated, HIV can damage your health and the health of your baby. Some possible complications include:

- Increased chance of miscarriages.
- Stillbirths.
- Below-average fetal growth.
- Low birth weight.
- Maternal death during childbirth.

Since HIV and AIDS damage the immune system, a pregnant woman with untreated HIV has an increased chance of catching other STDs like chlamydia, gonorrhea, or syphilis, as well as non-sexually transmitted diseases like toxoplasmosis or tuberculosis. These diseases can also harm both you and your baby during pregnancy.

HIV can pass to your baby any time during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.

However, if you are diagnosed with HIV before or during pregnancy, medications can greatly reduce the chance of passing HIV to your baby before, during, and after childbirth. Your doctor will test you regularly throughout your pregnancy to ensure both you and your baby get proper treatment.

SHOULD I STILL GET A TEST IF I DO NOT FEEL SICK?

If you have had unprotected sex or shared needles with someone else, you should get tested for HIV and other STDs as soon as possible. Even if a person looks or feels well, they could still have HIV and not know it. An HIV test is the only way to know for sure if you have HIV.

Ask your gynecologist or primary care doctor about HIV screening and testing during your next well-woman check or physical exam. You can also find a list of HIV and STD testing locations in Texas by visiting dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/testing.

WHAT IF I WAS EXPOSED TO HIV? ARE THERE ANY OPTIONS FOR TREATMENT?

If you believe you were exposed to HIV within the last 72 hours, go to your doctor or an emergency care physician immediately. They can test you for HIV and prescribe you medicine called post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP, to prevent HIV infection in someone recently exposed to it.

HOW CAN I PREVENT HIV?

If you regularly engage in behavior that puts you at risk of catching HIV, talk to your doctor about HIV testing, using condoms, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) treatment.

If you test negative for HIV, your doctor can prescribe PrEP to help prevent you from catching HIV. PrEP is safe to take with your birth control and minimizes the risk of getting HIV if taken every day.

I AM CURRENTLY TAKING BIRTH CONTROL. DO I STILL NEED TO USE CONDOMS?

You still need to use condoms if you take birth control. Birth control pills, intrauterine devices (IUDs), sponges, shots, and other forms of birth control do not protect you from HIV or other STDs.

IS THERE A CURE FOR HIV?

Currently, HIV cannot be cured. However, if you test positive for HIV, treatments can help you live a long and healthy life with minimal chance of passing HIV to your partner(s) or children.