

HIV- AIDS

* 30% of individuals entering treatment test + for HIV *Alabama has more HIV/AIDS cases per 100,000 people than any state in the US and *35,000 do not know they're HIV+

What is HIV/AIDS

HIV: the human immunodeficiency virus -is a virus that attacks the body's immune system and kills four body's '604 cells.' CD4 cells (also called T- helper cells) help four body fight off infection and disease. At present, there is no cure.

AIDS: the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome-is the last stage of HIV infection when HIV destroys your body's immune system. Normally, your immune system helps you fight off illness. When your immune system fails you can become very sick and die.

How can you get HIV? Four fluids transmit the HIV/AIDS virus: blood, breast milk, semen and vaginal secretions.

What are the most effective ways to prevent HIV?

Don't use/share needles when injecting drugs. Don't have sex (this includes oral and anal sex.). Make sure that if you have sex that it is with one other person that has been tested for the virus. Don't share razors or toothbrushes as they may contain small traces of blood.

What are some ways I can reduce the risk of HIV infection?

Use a condom -THE RIGHT WAY- every time during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Don't use drugs or alcohol, which can impair your judgment. Use latex gloves when you come in contact with blood. Clean all needles and syringes with bleach and water if more effective prevention is not available.

Who should be tested for HIV?

Anyone that engages in risky sexual behavior with more than one partner or with someone whose HIV status is unknown. Anyone who has ever used IV drugs. Anyone who has ever had a sexually transmitted disease (especially Chlamydia or gonorrhea). Anyone who has ever had a blood transfusion before 1985. If you've had sex with a person who has done any of these things.

- You CANNOT get HIV from being around another person with the disease.
- You also CANNOT get HIV by kissing, hugging, or donating blood.
- Mosquitoes, insects, sweat, spit, tears, drinking fountains, clothing, phones, toilet seats, or simply sharing a meal with an infected person does NOT transmit the virus!!!

What is hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by infection with the hepatitis C virus (HCV). The virus is found in the blood of persons who have this disease and is spread by contact with infected blood. You should be tested for hepatitis C...

- If you ever injected street drugs, even once many years ago.
- If you had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992.
- If you were treated for clotting problems with a blood product made before 1987.

- If you have ever been on long-term kidney dialysis.

Why is it important to be tested?

If you test positive for hepatitis C, it is very likely that you have chronic (long-term) liver disease.

You need to see a doctor to

- Find out if you have liver disease and if you should be treated for it.
- Learn how you can protect your liver from further harm.
- Learn how you can prevent spreading HCV to others.

But I don't feel sick.

Many persons who have hepatitis C have no symptoms and feel healthy for many years. For some persons, the most common symptom is extreme tiredness. The only way to tell if you have been infected with HCV is to have an HCV blood test, which is not part of a routine physical.

How serious is it?

If your HCV test is positive, your doctor should test you for liver disease. Hepatitis C is serious for some persons, but not for others. Most persons who get hepatitis C carry the virus for the rest of their lives and will have some liver damage, but many do not feel sick. Some persons with liver damage due to hepatitis C may develop cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver and liver failure, which may take many years to develop.

Is there treatment?

Current antiviral medicines may get rid of the virus and reduce liver disease. If you have hepatitis C, check with your doctor to see if treatment can help.

If you have it, protect your liver!

- Don't drink alcohol.
- See your doctor regularly.
- Check with your doctor before starting new medicines, including over-the-counter and herbal medicines.
- Get vaccinated for hepatitis A if you have liver disease.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HEPATITIS C:

Access our web site at www.cdc.gov/hepatitis

Or call the Hepatitis Information Line at 1-888-4HEP-CDC, 1-888-443-7232

Or write to

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Division of Viral Hepatitis, Mailstop G37

1600 Clifton Road

Atlanta, GA 30333

Ask Your Doctor if You or Your Loved Ones Should Be Tested for Hepatitis C.