



## **AIDS**

AIDS is still a serious threat. Rumour and half truth have misled a lot of people into being worried without cause – or worse, careless about the risks. Misinformation about AIDS has also resulted in needless discrimination. You owe it to yourself and your children to make sure the real facts are known and understood.

### **What is AIDS?**

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Acquired means you get it from someone else.

Immune Deficiency means your body cannot defend itself against certain illness.

Syndrome means a collection of signs and symptoms which a doctor may recognize as a disease. In the case of AIDS, such diseases include pneumonia, skin cancer and fungal infections.

No-one has been cured of AIDS.

### **What causes AIDS?**

AIDS is caused by the virus HIV (Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus), which attacks the body's immune system and makes it vulnerable to various infections. People who are infected with HIV may look healthy and not even know that they are infected, but they can still pass on the virus to others.

### **How is the virus spread?**

There are four proven ways in which HIV can be passed from person to person: -

1. Sexual contact – heterosexual or homosexual – involving exchange of infectious body fluids (semen, vaginal secretions and blood) with an infected person.
2. Sharing injection needles and equipment, with an infected person.
3. From an infected pregnant mother to her baby.
4. Injection or transfusion of blood or blood products taken from an infected person.

It is unjust to victimize persons with HIV or AIDS either socially or at work.

### **You cannot get HIV by . . .**

- Hugging and kissing on the lips.
- Sharing cutlery and crockery.
- Shaking hands.
- Using the same toilet facilities .
- Being sneezed or coughed upon.
- Insect or animal bites.
- Sitting beside someone.
- Using the same laundry facilities.
- Mouth to mouth resuscitation.
- Using swimming pools.

### **How to avoid infection.**

Remain faithful to one sexual partner who is also faithful to you. This assumes that neither of you has had previous sexual partners or engages in intravenous drug abuse.

Never share injection equipment for intravenous drug use.

Any device that punctures the skin may be infectious. This includes needles for syringes, tattooing and for acupuncture; ear piercing and electrolysis equipment. Avoid their use unless they have been properly sterilized (soaking at 56°C for 10 minutes).

Of course, abstaining from sex altogether is obviously a certain way of avoiding the sexual transmission of HIV infection.

### **These are high risks.**

- Having penetrative unprotected vaginal or anal sex with an infected person.
- Having oral sex with an infected person.
- Being unaware of your partner's sexual history.
- Abusing intravenous drugs, particularly if you share needles.
- Having a blood transfusion in a country where screening services are inadequate.

The use of any drug, whether it be heroin, ecstasy, cannabis or alcohol, may reduce your ability to make 'safe' decisions.

### **HIV & Condoms.**

To avoid sexual transmission of HIV, the most effective way of all is to :

- Stay with one partner
- Remain faithful to that one partner (this assumes that neither partner is already infected with the virus)

However, for sexually active people who are not in 'one faithful partner' relationships, a good quality new condom, correctly used, is the single most effective defence against HIV infection.

- Never use the same condom twice.
- Check the expiry date.
- Be careful not to damage the condom with fingernails, rings or its foil covering.
- Never have genital contact with a partner without the protection of a condom.
- If using a lubricant it should be water-based. Oil-based lubricants weaken the condom.

- After sex, carefully remove the condom to avoid spilling the semen, and dispose of it hygienically.

Remember, condoms reduce, but do not eliminate, the risk of infection. The contraceptive pill offers no protection against infection with the HIV virus.

### **HIV & Blood.**

If you donate blood in Ireland there is no risk of being infected, as sterile equipment and new needles are used for each donor. Remember that the need for blood is always acute and you should have no reservation about being a donor.

All blood products now used in the treatment of haemophilia and other conditions are derived from plasma that has been screened for HIV. Additionally, such products undergo an effective chemical procedure to render them safe.

In some less well-developed countries, blood supplies are not screened.

### **General Hygiene.**

- Areas where urine, faeces, blood and other body fluids have spilt should be cleaned with strong commercially available household bleach diluted with 10 parts of water. Mop up with disposable towels, using disposable household rubber gloves.
- Vomit should be cleared quickly and the spillage area then treated as for blood spills.
- All cuts and grazes should be covered with waterproof dressings until a scab has formed.
- Used dressing, tampons and sanitary towels should be disposed of in commercially available sani-bins or carefully disposed of as for other household wastes.
- Never share razor or toothbrushes.

### **Testing for HIV.**

If you think you have become infected with HIV, a test is available which will find out if you have antibodies to HIV in your blood. Antibodies are substances that the body produces to fight germs and viruses. If antibodies to HIV are present this means you have been infected by the virus.

It can take about 3 months after first infection for these antibodies to develop and during this time you may still be infectious.

If the test result shows that antibodies are present, a person is termed 'HIV positive' or 'antibody positive'. If you know you are HIV positive you can remain in good health for longer if you have regular medical supervision, and take positive steps to maintain a healthy lifestyle, e.g. appropriate exercise and diet.

If you are thinking about having a test contact your local GP, STD Clinic or AIDS Service Organisation.

## **Information – the first line of defence**

Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Clinics

### **Dublin**

The Baggot Street Clinic  
19 Haddington Road, Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 660 2149

The following information is subject to amendment:

1. HIV testing  
Tuesday: 2.30 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.  
Thursday: 5.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.
2. HIV Counselling  
Monday – Friday: By appointment
3. Gay Men's Health Project  
Tuesday & Wednesday: 6.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.
4. Women's Project  
Thursday: 8.30 p.m. – 10.30 p.m.
5. Needles Exchange  
Wednesday: 2.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Mater Misericordiae Hospital  
Eccles Street, Dublin 7.  
Tel: (01) 830 1122, Ext. 2063  
Monday – Thursday: 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

St. James's Hospital  
James's St., Dublin 8.  
Tel: (01) 453 7941, Ext. 2315 or 2316 / (01) 453 5245 (By appointment only)  
Monday & Friday: 9.30 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.  
Tuesday & Thursday: 1.30 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.

St. James's Hospital *contd.*  
HIV Out-patient clinic:  
Monday: 1.30 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 9.30 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.

Drug Treatment Centre Board  
Trinity Court, 30-31 Pearse Street., Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 677 1122  
Monday – Friday: 9.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.  
Saturday: 10.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Dublin Aids Alliance  
53 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1.  
Tel: (01) 873 3799  
Monday – Friday: 10.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

Cairde  
19 Belvedere Place, Dublin 1.  
Tel: (01) 873 0006  
Monday – Friday: 9.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

## **Cork**

Victoria Hospital, Cork

Tel: (021) 966 844 (By appointment only)

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 9.30 a.m. – 11.45 a.m.

Wednesday: 2.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Helpline number (021 966 844) available on Tuesdays: 1.00 p.m. – 2.00 p.m.

Alliance for AIDS and Sexual Health (formerly Cork Aids Alliance)

16 Peter Street, Cork.

Tel: (021) 275 837 (Office)

Tel: (021) 276 676 (Helpline)

Monday – Friday: 10.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

## **Galway**

University College Hospital Galway

Tel: (091) 525 200 (By appointment only)

Monday : 2.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.

Friday: 10.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

First Thursday of the month: 2.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Aids Help West (Education & Support Services)

Ozanam House, St Augustine Street, Galways.

Tel: (091) 566 266

Monday – Friday: 9.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. / 2.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

## **Limerick**

Limerick Regional Hospital

Dooradoyle, Limerick.

Tel: (061) 482 382 (by appointment only)

Tuesday – Friday: 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

The Red Ribbon Project

(Couselling & Support Services)

9 Cecil Street, Limerick.

Tel: (061) 314 354 (Office)

Fax: (061) 315 024

Confidential Helpline: (061) 316 661

Monday – Friday: 9.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

## **Mayo**

Mayo General Hospital

Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

Tel: (094) 21733

Clinics, Tuesday mornings (By appointment only)

10.15 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

## **Ennis**

Ennis General Hospital  
Tel: (061) 482 382  
Monday: 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.  
(By appointment only)

### **Nenagh**

Nenagh General Hospital  
Tel: (061) 482 382  
Wednesday: 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.  
(By appointment only)

### **Sligo**

Regional Hospital, The Mall, Sligo.  
Tel: (071) 70473  
Tuesday & Thursday: 6.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.  
Helpline: Monday - Thursday: 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

### **Waterford**

Waterford Regional Hospital  
Out-patient Department 10, Waterford.  
Tel: (051) 854149  
Monday: 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.  
Thursday: 9.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.

### **Northern Ireland Belfast**

Royal Victoria Hospital  
Tel: 0801232 – 894777  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 8.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.  
Tuesday & Thursday: 8.30 a.m. – 11.10 a.m.

### **Coleraine**

Coleraine Hospital  
Out-patient Department  
Tel: 0801265 – 44177, Ext. 2080  
Tuesday: 5.00 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.  
Friday: 2.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.

### **Derry**

Altnagelvin Hospital  
Anderson House, Glenshane Rd., Derry.  
Tel: 0801504 – 611269  
Walk-in-clinics: Monday, Wednesday, Friday:  
9.30 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.

### **Newry**

Daisy Hill Hospital  
GUM Clinic, Newry, Co. Down.  
Tel: 0801693 – 65511  
Walk-in-clinics: Wednesday: 9.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.

**Confidential telephone services are available at the following locations to give you any further advice:**

DUBLIN  
(01) 872 4277  
Monday - Friday: 7.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.  
Saturday: 3.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

CORK  
(021) 276 676  
Monday - Friday: 10.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

GALWAY  
(091) 525200  
Monday: 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.  
Thursday: 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.

LIMERICK  
(061) 316661  
Monday - Friday: 9.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

DONEGAL  
(074) 25500  
Monday & Thursday: 10.30 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.

SLIGO  
(071) 70473  
Monday – Thursday: 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

WATERFORD  
(051) 54149  
Monday: 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.  
Thursday: 9.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.

