

## Fiction

## Fact

**Fiction:** You can contract HIV by hugging, kissing, sharing food or drink, in a swimming pool, or even when someone coughs or sneezes.

**Fact:** Not all body fluids can spread the virus. HIV transmission does not occur from contact with saliva, tears, sweat, urine, or feces. The body fluids that can carry HIV and spread it from one person to another are: Blood, Semen, Vaginal secretions, Breast milk.

**Fiction:** HIV only affects other people, not me or you.

**Fact:** Everyone is vulnerable to HIV transmission and no one is immune. Know the facts to protect yourself and your family.



**Smart  
Youth  
Making  
Smart  
choices**

Quick Fact Sheet On **HIV/AIDS**

UNODC-Lebanon

For more info check: [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

## What is HIV?

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. It is a virus that attacks the cells of the human immune system and destroys or impairs their function. With a weakened immune system, it is harder for the body to fight infection making the body vulnerable to a number of potentially life-threatening infections and cancers. There is no cure for HIV infection, but treatment exists to help people live healthily with HIV for many years. HIV is infectious, which means it can be transmitted from one person to another, yet it is preventable, which means that you can avoid exposure to HIV from the below three modes of transmission.

### How can HIV be transmitted?

- Unprotected sexual intercourse without consistent and correct condom use with someone living with HIV
- Exposure to infected blood through blood transfusion, use of contaminated injection equipment during injecting drug use, use of improperly sterilized syringes and other medical equipment in health-care settings.
- Transmission from a mother living with HIV to her child, during pregnancy, during delivery, or as a result of breastfeeding.



## What is AIDS?

If left untreated, HIV will almost always deplete the immune system, leaving the body vulnerable to one or more life-threatening diseases that normally do not affect healthy people. This stage of HIV infection is called AIDS, or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The more the immune system has been damaged, the greater the risk of death from opportunistic

infections (infections that take advantage of weaknesses in the immune system).

Without treatment, HIV generally takes 8 to 10 years to progress to AIDS. The combination of medicines that treat HIV is known as antiretroviral therapy (ARV). ARVs change the natural course of HIV infection, significantly extending the period between initial infection and the development of symptoms. It is important to diagnose HIV infection before AIDS symptoms develop, in order to initiate therapy early enough before the immune system is damaged.

## Living positively with HIV

People living with HIV should not be treated differently and are often active members of society. They can live normal lives, go to school, work, shop at malls, eat at restaurants, etc. People should not fear coming into contact with someone who has HIV, as the only way the infection can spread are via the modes of transmission listed previously. People living with HIV are no different than anyone else and should be treated respectfully and equally. Stigma and discrimination are counterproductive to public health and should be tackled in all HIV prevention activities.

## How can I protect myself from HIV?

- Abstain from sex or if you practice sex use latex condoms consistently and correctly
- Get yourself and your partner tested and be faithful to one another if both are tested negative
- No one (including injecting drug users) should ever re-use a needle, syringe, or equipment that has already been used by another person.

**The only way to know if you are living with HIV is to get tested.**



Lebanon

## 2011 NAP HIV Statistics

- ! Number of newly reported cases up to November 2011 = 109
- ! Number of Cumulative cases up to November 2011 = 1455
- ! The Majority of newly reported cases were transmitted via sexual relation (51%)



Testing is confidential and available at NAP facilities across Lebanon.

Contact **NAP** (National AIDS Control Programme) to find out about sites near you (<http://www.leb.emro.who.int/NationalProgaid.htm>)

