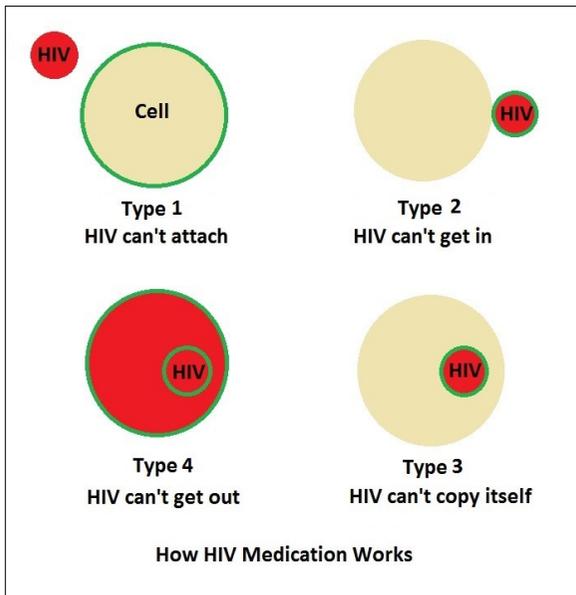


HIV MEDICATION

As of 2015 there is no cure for HIV. There is no way to remove HIV from a person's body. However, HIV can be controlled with medication.

In Ireland, HIV medication is free to anyone who needs it, (whether we have a medical card or not).

There are 4 types of HIV medication. When people take HIV medication, they take two or three types at the same time to treat HIV at different stages. When the medication has the HIV under control, the person can live a normal life span.



If we are living with HIV we can still do all the things we would usually do; like work, have relationships, meet friends, travel or have children, if we want to.

HIV TESTING

If we know we are living with HIV then we can do what we need to do, to stay healthy.

Getting a HIV test is free to everyone, at all STI clinics (regardless of whether we have a medical card or not).

Contact GOSHH for support or information about HIV testing options. We give out free condoms as well.

USEFUL NUMBERS:

STI CLINIC
(Nenagh, Ennis, Limerick)
061 482382
theclinic@hse.ie

ANA LIFFEY DRUGS PROJECT LIMERICK
085 1559158

HSE DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE
1850 700 850

Redwood Place,
18 Davis Street,
Limerick
061 314354

info@goshh.ie
www.goshh.ie



What HIV is,
what HIV does,
and other things you
might like to know.

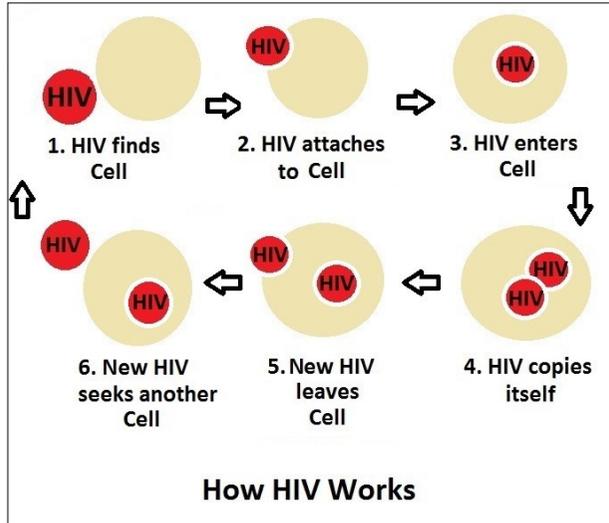


HIV
Information
Leaflet

HIV

HIV stands for 'Human Immunodeficiency Virus' This mean all humans can contract HIV; your immune system is weakened by HIV, and HIV is a virus that causes a viral infection.

HIV copies itself into our immune system cells and those cells remain infected for their entire lifetime.



Our immune system is what helps us to fight off infections every day. When our immune system is weak, we may feel very tired and we could get ill more often. Things like a cold, or the flu, might take longer for us to recover from.

HIV targets our immune system. It takes HIV a long time to weaken our immune system. We can live with HIV for years without knowing it.

There are ways to prevent HIV transmission and there are things we can do to help ourselves.

HIV TRANSMISSION

There are five body fluids in which HIV might be passed from person to person. These are:

- **Blood**
- **Semen**
- **Vaginal Fluid**
- **Anal Fluid**
- **Breast Milk**

In order for HIV to be transmitted three things must happen:

- There has to be a high enough quantity of HIV present in the blood, breast milk, semen, vaginal or anal fluid during transmission.
- The HIV cells have to be healthy.
- There has to be a way for it to pass from one person to another.

There are three main ways in which HIV is generally transmitted:

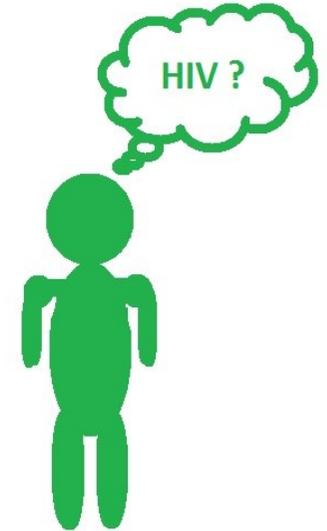
- **SEX**—Through unprotected sexual contact with an infected person.
- **BLOOD**—Through infected blood products like sharing needles and blood transfusions.
- **MOTHER TO CHILD** —In the womb, during labour, or after the birth through breast feeding.

HIV cannot be transmitted by hugging, sharing cups, sleeping in the same bed, kissing, tickling, massaging, talking, drinking, smoking or sharing a space with someone.

HIV PREVENTION

Using Condoms

Condoms create a barrier that HIV cannot get through. Condoms can protect from HIV and other STIs (sexually transmitted infections) whenever we are having sex that involves a penis or sex toy.



Female Condoms

The female condom is different from the standard condom. It might be suitable for us if we:

- are allergic to latex;
- don't like standard condoms;
- wish to have safer sex.

HIV and Blood

There are many ways people's blood can mix, and get into and out of each others bodies.

Some things we need to be aware of are:

- If HIV is present in a persons body then it is also present in the menstrual (period) blood.
- Always use sterile works (needles and other injecting equipment) if possible.
- If we are having tattoos or piercings, we can ask the person what they do to guarantee our safety. Make sure they use sterile equipment and gloves, have good hygiene, and dispose of needles safely.