

HIV HANDBOOK FOR **EVERYONE**

Understanding, Preventing,
and Living with HIV



Introduction

Welcome!

This handbook is designed to help you understand HIV, how it spreads, how to prevent it, and how to live well with it.

Why it matters

HIV affects millions worldwide but can be managed.

Early testing and treatment save lives.

Knowledge reduces stigma and helps communities thrive.

What you'll learn

- What HIV is and how it affects the body
- Ways HIV spreads and does not spread
- How to get tested and treated
- Prevention strategies
- Living a healthy life with HIV

What is HIV and AIDS?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) attacks immune cells called CD4 cells.

AIDS is the most severe stage of HIV, where the immune system cannot fight infections effectively.

Important facts

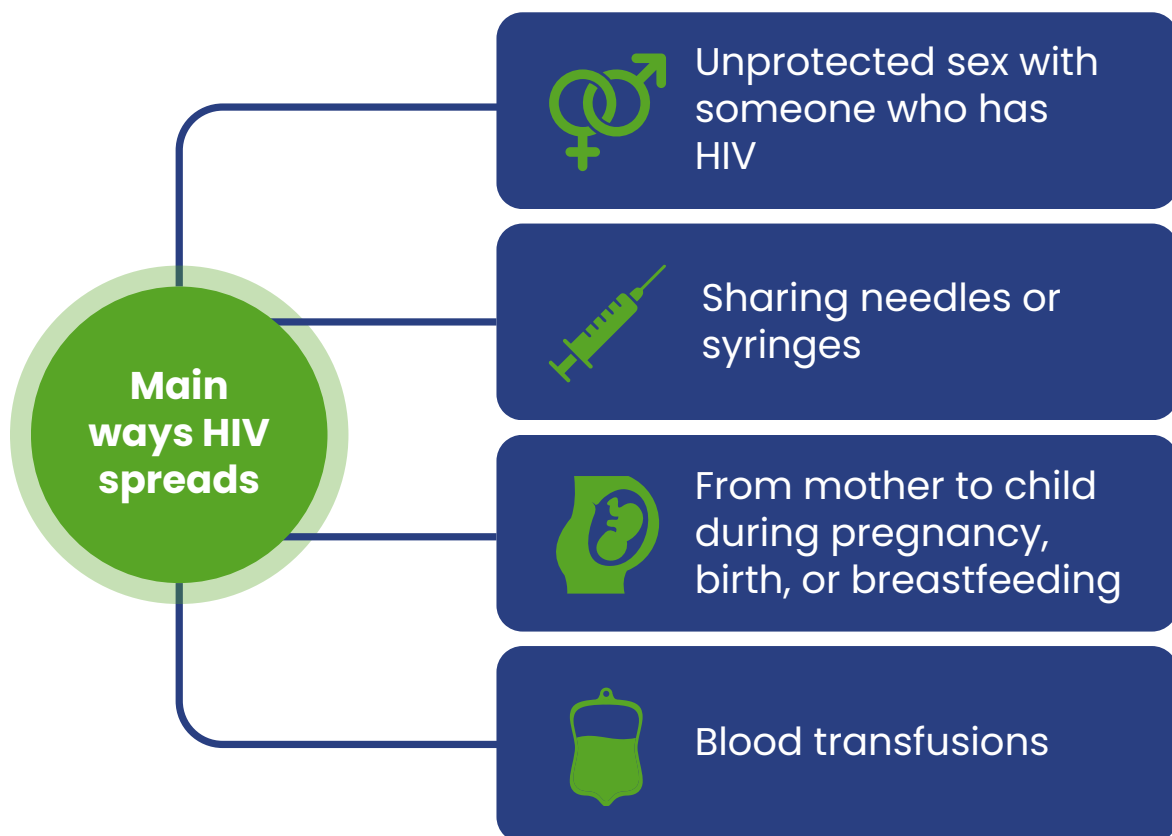
- Not everyone with HIV develops AIDS if treated.
- HIV can stay silent for years—so testing is important.



How HIV Spreads

HIV is spread through certain body fluids:

1. Blood
2. Semen and vaginal fluids
3. Breast milk



Common myths busted

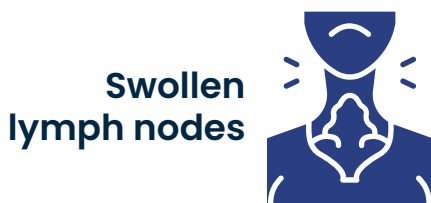
You cannot get HIV from hugging, sharing food, shaking hands, toilet seats, or mosquito bites.

Activity

List myths you've heard about HIV.

Signs and Symptoms

Early symptoms (2–4 weeks after infection)



Late symptoms (if untreated)



Tip

Early detection through testing is crucial, as symptoms can be mild or absent.

**Symptoms alone cannot confirm HIV, as similar signs may occur with other conditions. It is important to consult a healthcare provider for proper evaluation and testing.*

Testing for HIV

Why test

To know your status and start treatment early.

To protect your partner and family.

Types of tests

- **Rapid Test:** 20–30 minutes, finger-prick blood or oral swab.
- **Blood Test:** More accurate lab test.

Where to get tested

- Hospitals and clinics
- Community testing centers
- Mobile testing units

Confidentiality: Your results are private.



HIV Treatment

ART (Antiretroviral Therapy)

Daily medications that reduce the virus in the body.

Keeps your immune system healthy.

Prevents progression to AIDS.

Adherence tips

- Take your medicine at the same time every day.
- Don't skip doses.
- Regularly attend clinic check-ups.

Benefits

- Normal life expectancy
- Reduced risk of passing HIV to others
- Improved overall health

Prevention

Effective ways to prevent HIV

- Use condoms correctly every time.
- Avoid sharing needles or sharp objects.
- PrEP: Daily medicine for people at high risk or a 6 monthly injection (LEN PrEP).
- PMTCT: Medicine for HIV-positive mothers to prevent transmission to babies.

Healthy habits

- Limit number of sexual partners.
- Regular HIV testing.
- Support from community, religious leaders, or peer groups.

Activity

Tick off prevention strategies you follow.



LEN PrEP

What is LEN PrEP?

LEN PrEP is a new way to prevent HIV infection using a long-acting medicine called **Lenacapavir**.

PrEP means **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis**, which is medicine taken by HIV-negative people to prevent HIV before exposure.

Unlike daily pills, LEN PrEP is designed to **protect people for a long time with fewer doses**.

How LEN PrEP Works

HIV needs to enter and multiply inside the body to cause infection.

Lenacapavir blocks a key part of the virus called the capsid, which stops HIV from multiplying.

This means the virus **cannot establish infection in the body**.

Who Can Use LEN PrEP?

LEN PrEP may be useful for people who are at higher risk of HIV, such as:

- People with an HIV-positive sexual partner
- People with multiple sexual partners
- Individuals who do not consistently use condoms
- People who inject drugs and share needles
- Sex workers
- Adolescents and young adults in high-risk communities

A healthcare worker will determine if LEN PrEP is suitable for you.

How It Is Given

LEN PrEP is usually given as a long-acting injection under the skin.

Typical schedule:

1. Initial dose given by a healthcare provider
2. Follow-up injections **every 6 months**

This means **only two injections per year** may provide protection.



Benefits of LEN PrEP

- Long-lasting protection against HIV.
- No need to remember a daily pill.
- Discreet and convenient.
- May improve adherence to HIV prevention.
- Highly effective when used correctly.

Important Things to Know

Before starting LEN PrEP:

- You must **test negative** for HIV.
- A healthcare worker will assess your health history.
- Regular **HIV testing every few months** is required.

Possible Side Effects

Most people tolerate LEN PrEP well, but some may experience:

- Mild pain or swelling at the injection site
- Headache • Nausea • Fatigue

Serious side effects are **rare** but should be reported to a healthcare provider.

LEN PrEP vs Daily PrEP

LEN PrEP vs Daily PrEP Pills

Feature	Daily PrEP Pills	LEN PrEP
How taken	Pill every day	Injection
Frequency	Daily	Every 6 months
Convenience	Requires daily adherence	Long-acting
Provider visit	Occasional	Injection visits

Important Reminder

LEN PrEP **does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or pregnancy.**

For full protection:

- Use **condoms**.
- Test regularly for **HIV and STIs**.
- Seek medical advice if exposed to HIV.

Living with HIV

Daily life with HIV

- Maintain good nutrition.
- Exercise regularly.
- Manage stress and mental health.
- Join support groups.

Stigma and Discrimination

HIV-positive people should not be blamed or isolated

Education helps communities reduce fear and myths



Special Topics



HIV and pregnancy

Women on ART can have HIV-free babies



HIV and youth

Safe practices for teenagers and young adults



HIV and relationships

Disclosure, support, and safe intimacy



Traveling with HIV

Carry your medications; no special restrictions in most countries

Resources & Quick Reference

Contact points

- Local HIV clinics, hospitals
- National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA)
hotline: **+234 809 183 6222**
- Peer support and community groups

Quick Reference Table

Topic	Key Point
HIV	Virus attacks immune system
Spread	Blood, semen, vaginal fluids, breast milk
Not Spread	Hugging, sharing food, mosquitoes
Test	Rapid or lab test; confidential
Treatment	Daily ART; adherence is key
Prevention	Condoms, PrEP, clean needles, PMTCT

Final Tip

Knowledge + testing + treatment + prevention = a healthy life.

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