

HIV/AIDS

HIV refers to Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is a virus spread through body fluids and affects cells of the immune system called CD4 cells or T cells. Over time, HIV destroys many of the CD4 cells making it difficult for the body to fight off infections and disease. When this happens, it leads to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).

HIV progresses in stages and treatment (Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) helps slow or prevents progression from one stage to another.

When first infected with HIV, you may have no symptoms at all. Some people however develop a flu-like illness, usually two to four weeks after being infected. These early signs and symptoms usually disappear within a week to a month and are often mistaken for those of another viral infection. During this period, you are very infectious. More persistent or severe symptoms of HIV infection may not appear for 10 years or more after the initial infection.

It is important to note that despite the symptoms, the surest way of knowing your HIV status is going for a HIV Test.

As the virus continues to multiply and destroy immune cells, you may develop mild infections or chronic signs and symptoms such as:

- Swollen lymph nodes;
- Diarrhoea;
- Weight loss;
- Fever; Cough
- Shortness of breath.

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS):

This is a stage of infection where the immune is badly damaged and you become vulnerable to Opportunistic infections such as

- Tuberculosis (TB);
- Pneumonia;
- Candidiasis;
- Herpes simplex,
- Herpes zoster among others.

When the number of your CD4 cells falls below 200 cells per cubic millimetre of blood (200 cells/mm³), you are considered to have progressed to AIDS. Normal CD4 counts are between 500 and 1,600 cells/mm³.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Contact Us on



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Syphilis

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection caused by bacteria. It progresses in stages and each stage has specific symptoms.

Symptoms of the primary stage:

A single, painless sore appearing 10 to 90 days after infection. It can appear in the genital area, mouth, or other parts of the body. The sore goes away on its own.

Symptoms of the secondary stage:

If the infection is not treated, it moves to the secondary stage. This stage starts 3 to 6 weeks after the sore appears.

- Skin rash with rough, red or reddish-brown spots on the hands and feet that usually does not itch and clears on its own
- Fever
- Sore throat and swollen glands
- Patchy hair loss
- Headaches and muscle aches
- Weight loss
- Tiredness

In the latent stage, symptoms go away, but can come back. Without treatment, the infection may or may not move to the late stage. In the late stage, symptoms are related to damage to internal organs, such as the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, blood vessels, liver, bones, and joints. Some people may die.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is a bacterial infection of your genital tract. Chlamydia may be difficult for you to detect because early-stage infections often cause few or no signs and symptoms. When they do occur, they usually start one to three weeks after you've been exposed to chlamydia. Even when signs and symptoms do occur, they're often mild and passing, making them easy to overlook.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Painful urination
- Lower abdominal pain
- Discharge from the genitals
- Pain during sexual intercourse in women
- Testicular pain in men

Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea is a bacterial infection of your genital tract. The first gonorrhoea symptoms generally appear within two to 10 days after exposure. However, some people may be infected for months before signs or symptoms occur.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Thick, cloudy or bloody discharge from the penis or vagina
- Pain or burning sensation when urinating
- Abnormal menstrual bleeding
- Painful, swollen testicles
- Painful bowel movements
- Anal itching

Genital Herpes

Genital herpes is caused by herpes simplex virus. Some people may have mild or no symptoms of the infections.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Small red bumps, blisters, or open sores on or around the penis, vagina, or mouth
- Discharge from the genitals
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Pain when urinating
- Itching, burning, or swollen glands in genital area
- Pain in legs, buttocks, or genital area

Symptoms may go away and then come back.

Trichomoniasis

Trichomoniasis is a common STI which affects the urinary tract in men, and the vagina in women.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Clear, white, greenish or yellowish vaginal discharge
- Discharge from the penis
- Strong vaginal odour
- Vaginal itching or irritation
- Itching or irritation inside the penis
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Painful urination