

WHAT IS HIV/AIDS?

HIV means **HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS**. It is the virus that causes AIDS, if left untreated. It attacks the body's immune system making them weak to fight against diseases.

YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM IS LIKE "SOLDIERS" GUARDING YOUR BODY AGAINST INFECTIONS.



At the moment, there is no cure for HIV, so once a person becomes infected with the virus, it remains in their body for life.

However, you can still live a fulfilled life and achieve all your dreams, if you know your status, and start treatment on time -if you are positive.

AIDS stands for **ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME**. AIDS describes how your body becomes sick because of damage to your immune system and you can catch many diseases that people with strong immune systems don't get. This happens because the HIV virus was not treated.

HOW IS HIV TRANSMITTED?

You can get infected with HIV through any of the following ways:

1. Having unprotected sex through (vaginal -vagina, oral- mouth, anal- anus) with an infected person.
2. Mother-to-child-transmission - an HIV positive mother can infect her baby during pregnancy, delivery or breastfeeding.
3. Through the transfusion of contaminated blood. This is why it is important for one to be screened for HIV before donating blood and to also verify from the healthcare provider that the blood is not contaminated before you receive blood.
4. Sharing sharp objects like drug injection tools, syringes, needles, razor blades and other instruments for shaving, tattoos or circumcision without disinfecting them.

REMEMBER YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO REQUEST FOR NEW SHARP OBJECTS OR INSIST THAT THEY ARE DISINFECTED BEFORE USE, WHEN YOU GO TO THE BARBER'S SHOP, THE HAIR SALON, THE TATTOO PARLOUR OR THE CLINIC ETC.



AHA! ONE MORE THING YOU NEED TO KNOW, YOU CAN'T GET HIV FROM:

HUGGING



DANCING

HANDSHAKES



SHARING TOILET SEATS



SWIMMING POOL OR BATHROOMS



FOOD UTENSILS, FOOD OR DRINKING CUPS

INSECT BITES E.G. MOSQUITOES, FLIES, OR BED BUGS ETC.



KISSING - UNLESS THERE ARE OPEN SORES IN THE MOUTH

COUGHING, BREATHING THE SAME AIR, OR SWEATS, LIVING TOGETHER OR SHARING THE SAME BED WITH SOMEONE LIVING WITH HIV.

