



MERCURY PHOENIX TRUST

HIV/AIDS FACTS AND FIGURES

There were approximately 36.7 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2016.
Of these, 2.1 million were children under 15 years
None of us are immune and HIV/AIDS affects us all.
1 million people died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2016, bringing the total number of people who have died from AIDS-related illnesses since the start of the epidemic to 35.0 million.

WHAT EXACTLY IS AIDS?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that damages the cells in your immune system and weakens your ability to fight everyday infections and disease.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is the name used to describe a number of potentially life-threatening infections and illnesses that happen when your immune system has been severely damaged by the HIV virus.

While AIDS can't be transmitted from one person to another, the HIV virus can.

HOW IS HIV TRANSMITTED?

HIV is found in the body fluids of an infected person. This includes semen, vaginal and anal fluids, blood (including menstrual blood) and breast milk.

It's a fragile virus and doesn't survive outside the body for long. HIV can't be transmitted through sweat, urine or saliva nor does the virus spread through the air like cold and flu viruses.

The most common way of getting and transmitting HIV in the UK is through having anal or vaginal sex without a condom.

WHAT ARE OTHER WAYS OF BECOMING INFECTED WITH OR TRANSMITTING HIV?

sharing needles, syringes and other injecting equipment
from mother to baby before or during birth or by breastfeeding
sharing sex toys with someone infected with HIV
healthcare workers accidentally pricking themselves with an infected needle, but this risk is extremely low
blood transfusions – now very rare in the UK, but still a problem in developing countries
The chance of getting or transmitting HIV through oral sex is very low and will be dependent on many things, such as whether you receive or give oral sex and the oral hygiene of the person giving the oral sex. The risk is higher if:

the person giving oral sex has mouth ulcers, sores or bleeding gums
the person receiving oral sex has recently been infected with HIV and has a lot of the virus in their body, or another sexually transmitted infection.

HIV is **NOT** passed on through:

spitting /saliva
social kissing
hugging and contact with unbroken, healthy skin
being sneezed on
sharing baths, towels or cutlery
sharing toilets or swimming pools
mouth-to-mouth resuscitation
contact with animals or insects like mosquitoes
through the air

WHO'S MOST AT RISK?

People who are at higher risk of becoming infected with HIV include:

Men who have unprotected sex with men.

Women who have unprotected sex with men who have sex with men.

Girls are more vulnerable to HIV because they are more vulnerable generally – due to gender inequality, violence including sexual violence, trafficking and cultural practices and traditions.

People who inject drugs and share equipment.

Medical procedures that involve unsterile cutting or piercing and tattooing.

People who have unprotected sex with somebody who has injected drugs and shared equipment.

People with another sexually transmitted infection.

People who have received a blood transfusion while in Africa, eastern Europe, the countries of the former Soviet Union, Asia or central and southern America.

IS THERE A CURE?

NO. There is still no cure for AIDS but Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) provides effective treatments that enable most people with the virus to live a long and healthy life. If one of a couple is on ART, the likelihood of sexual transmission to the HIV-negative partner decreases by 96%!!!

HOW CAN PEOPLE REDUCE THEIR RISK OF GETTING HIV?

1. **The best way to prevent HIV is to use a condom for sex and never share needles or other injecting equipment, including syringes, spoons and swabs.**

2. **Get tested and know your partner's HIV status.** Talk to your partner about HIV testing and get tested before you have sex.
3. **Have less risky sex.** HIV is mainly spread by having anal or vaginal sex without a condom or without taking medicines to prevent or treat HIV.
4. **Use condoms.** Use a condom correctly every time you have vaginal, anal, or oral sex.
5. **Limit your number of sexual partners.** The more partners you have, the more likely you are to have a partner with HIV whose HIV is not well controlled or to have a partner with a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Both of these factors can increase the risk of HIV transmission. If you have more than one sexual partner, get tested for HIV regularly.
6. **Get tested and treated for STDs.** Insist that your partners get tested and treated too. Having an STD can increase your risk of becoming infected with HIV or spreading it to others.
7. **Talk to your health care provider about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).** PrEP is an HIV prevention option for people who don't have HIV but who are at high risk of becoming infected with HIV. PrEP involves taking a specific HIV medicine every day. For more information, read the AIDS *info* fact sheet on [Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis \(PrEP\)](#).
8. **Don't inject drugs.** But if you do, use only sterile drug injection equipment and water and never share your equipment with others.

GLOBAL FACTS / Why do we keep on fighting? / Where do we stand currently?

The first 5 known cases of HIV in the United States were reported in 1981.

Today, more than 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the USA, but 1 in 7 of them doesn't know it.

East & South Africa – Approximately 19.4 million people are living with AIDS.

India – 2.1 million people are living with AIDS.

Myanmar – it is estimated there were approximately 230,000 people living with HIV in 2016.

Sub-Saharan Africa - remains most severely affected, with nearly 1 in every 25 adults (4.2%) living with HIV and accounting for nearly two-thirds of the people living with HIV worldwide.

U.K. – An estimated 89,400 people are living with AIDS. Disturbingly, despite testing and treatment being free and universally available in the UK, around 13,500 people are unaware of their HIV infection.

An estimated 1.8 million individuals worldwide became newly infected with HIV in 2016 – about 5,000 new infections per day. This includes 160,000 children under 15 years.

Most of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa and were infected by their HIV-positive mothers during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding.

Currently only 60% of people with HIV know their status. The remaining 40% (over 14 million people) still need to access HIV testing services.

As of July 2017, 20.9 million people living with HIV were accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART) globally, up from 15.8 million in June 2015, 7.5 million in 2010, and less than one million in 2000.

HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age in developing countries.

The number of adolescents dying due to AIDS-related illnesses tripled between 2000 and 2015, the only age group to have experienced a rise. AIDS is now the leading cause of death among young people in Africa and the second leading cause of death among young people worldwide.

WHAT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE?

As a result of recent advances in access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), HIV-positive people now live longer and healthier lives. In addition, it has been confirmed that ART prevents onward transmission of HIV.

In the mid 1990s, Cambodia had one of the most serious epidemics in Asia. The Government initiated a large-scale prevention and education programme cutting the adult infection rate in half and providing treatment to 80% of eligible individuals. They have become a global leader in the fight against AIDS dramatically reducing the HIV prevalence to 0.7%. Their goal now is the elimination of new HIV infections by 2020.

India's HIV epidemic is slowing down, with a 32% decline in new HIV infections (80,000 in 2016), and a 54% decline in AIDS-related deaths between 2007 and 2015.

For 21 years MPT has been supporting those at the frontlines of the fight to end new transmissions. We have seen many victories and we continue to push on to ensure the gains won are not lost. Should you wish to stand and help The Mercury Phoenix Trust with this fight, please go to DONATE on our Get Involved Page. Thank you.

Updated March 2018