

# What are Some Ways to Prevent the Spread of HIV?

## HIV Testing

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care.

## Condoms

Condoms are highly effective in reducing the risk of HIV transmission and many other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) when used consistently and correctly.

## PrEP

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is medicine taken to prevent getting HIV. PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV when taken as prescribed.

## Never Share Needles

Use new, clean syringes and injection equipment every time you inject.

# How can you promote awareness and reduce HIV stigma?

## 1 Get tested

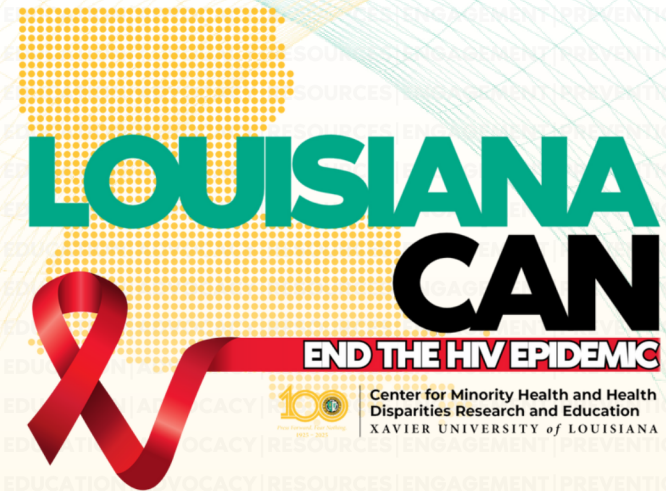
**Taking charge of your health means getting an HIV test—an essential step for your well-being and the safety of those you care about.**

**If your test is positive**, you can still lead a long and healthy life by taking medicines that maintain the virus at undetectable levels. Individuals who consistently achieve an undetectable viral load through effective treatment cannot transmit the virus to their sexual partners. This concept is known as 'U=U' (Undetectable equals Untransmittable)."

**If your test is negative**, take proactive steps for HIV protection, such as using PrEP. Remember to continue regular testing and make informed decisions to prioritize your health.

## 2 Urge your family and friends to get tested

**Start the conversation and challenge stereotypes.** Encourage HIV testing to promote early detection and access to necessary care.



# HIV FACTS



[www.louisianacan.org](http://www.louisianacan.org)



# What is HIV/AIDS?

**HIV**, or human immunodeficiency virus, is a virus that attacks the immune system leading to HIV infection. If left untreated, it can progress to **AIDS** (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), which is the late stage of infection when the immune system is severely compromised by the virus.

# How is HIV transmitted?

- 1 Sexual contact (vaginal or anal sex)
- 2 Sharing needles for injecting drugs or tattooing
- 3 Through pregnancy and breastfeeding



## Common Misconceptions

### ✘ These are MYTHS!

**Myth #1:** HIV can be transmitted by:

- Kissing/saliva
- Hugging
- Mosquitoes, ticks, or other insects
- Sharing dishes
- Sharing toilet seats
- Sweat/tears
- Handshaking

HIV can **ACTUALLY** be transmitted through:

- Blood
- Pre-seminal fluids & seminal fluid
- Rectal & vaginal fluids
- Breast milk

### ✘ MYTH!

**Myth # 2:** HIV only affects gay and bisexual men

While gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men are more significantly impacted by HIV, the virus also affects heterosexual individuals, especially black and brown men, black women, and transgender women.

According to the CDC, about one-fifth of new HIV infections in 2021 were among women, and over half of those were among Black women.

**HIV/AIDS affects people regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or religion. Empower yourself by taking control of your sexual health.**

