

HIV

Symptoms

HIV can cause flu-like symptoms in the first few weeks after a person has become infected. Other symptoms may include:

- Extreme tiredness
- Fever
- Swollen lymph glands
- Loss of appetite
- Aching muscles and joints

Why you need to see a doctor if you have been at risk of HIV

If you think you have been at a high risk of HIV, you should talk to your doctor as soon as possible or visit this website <http://getpep.info/> to find locations across Australia where this medication is available. There is medication that can stop HIV from staying in your body, if you take the medication within 72 hours of when you were at risk.

If it has been longer than 72 hours since you have been at risk of HIV, you should get tested for HIV. Evidence shows that in general, the sooner you start treatment for HIV, the better your health will be long term. HIV can cause your immune system to be weak and allow other infections to affect your health, it can cause death if not treated.

Prevention

HIV can be spread through unprotected sex and blood to blood contact (usually from using tattooing, piercing or injecting equipment that is not sterile). Using condoms or dams and lubricant every time you have vaginal, anal or oral sex will reduce your risk of getting HIV and other STIs. Not sharing sharp equipment like razors, or needles will also reduce your risk of getting HIV.

People who are at a higher risk of HIV, such as men who have sex with men, or people with a HIV positive partner, can take PrEP – pre-exposure prophylaxis. This is a pill that you take once a day and can get from your doctor. It is very effective at stopping people from getting HIV when they are taking the pill every day. Talk to your doctor for more information.

Testing

If you have had sex without a condom, you may be at risk of HIV. You should go to a doctor to be tested. The doctor will then send you for a blood test.

Treatment

There is no cure for HIV but there is treatment available. Many people with HIV live long lives when they are on treatment. Treatment can also reduce the risk of passing HIV on to others.

HIV positive people who are on treatment and have a current blood test that shows they have an 'undetectable' level of HIV in their blood cannot pass on HIV to other people.

For more information

Talk to your doctor or local health clinic.