



HIV Infection/AIDS

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is found in the blood, sperm, vaginal secretions and breast milk of infected people. In addition to unprotected sexual intercourse with HIV-positive people not on treatment and transmission via infected blood, the infection can pass from an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, at the time of birth or through breastfeeding.

The simultaneous presence of genital lesions caused by another sexually transmitted infection (e.g. genital herpes or syphilis) might increase the likelihood of contracting HIV during sexual intercourse.

People infected with HIV could feel no symptoms even for a long time, during which, however, the infection is present and capable of being transmitted. This shows **the importance of undergoing the HIV test**, especially where a person has unprotected sexual intercourse. To run the test, you can approach your general practitioner or go directly to the test & counselling centres where **it can be performed free of charge as well as anonymously (to know where: helpaids.it/test, AIDS toll-free number 800 856080).**

The timely diagnosis of HIV infection is extremely important as it allows intervention with specific drugs that do not cure the infection altogether, being unable to eliminate the virus from the body, but prevent its multiplication.

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A PrEP CLINIC IN EMILIA-ROMAGNA
ON helpaids.it


If drugs are taken correctly and in the right doses, HIV infection is controllable and the life expectancy of HIV-positive people becomes comparable to that of the general population.

People with zero viremia do not transmit the infection. In practice, the antiretroviral therapy protects from the clinical progression of the infection (AIDS), characterised by a high mortality rate.

THE ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY CAN ALSO BE USED TO PREVENT HIV TRANSMISSION RESULTING FROM AN EVENT AT RISK, SUCH AS AFTER AN OCCASIONAL UNPROTECTED INTERCOURSE OR ONE IN WHICH THE CONDOM BREAKS. IN THIS CASE, WE SPEAK OF POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PEP). THE PEP, PRESCRIBED BY THE INFECTIOLOGIST OR BY THE EMERGENCY ROOM DOCTOR TO PEOPLE TESTING NEGATIVE TO THE SCREENING TEST, SHOULD BE TAKEN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND IN ANY EVENT WITHIN 72 HOURS FROM POSSIBLE EXPOSURE. IT IS NEVERTHELESS NOT 100% EFFECTIVE AND SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CONDOM.

PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PREP), INSTEAD, CONSISTS IN THE INTAKE OF ANTIRETROVIRAL DRUGS BEFORE A POTENTIALLY RISKY SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.

IT IS RECOMMENDED FOR HIV-NEGATIVE PEOPLE WITH SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AT HIGH RISK OF HIV INFECTION.



**REMEMBER:
THE HIV TEST IS FREE
AND CAN BE
PERFORMED
ANONYMOUSLY!**