

You need to know all about HIV : information and advice / NHS, Health First.

Contributors

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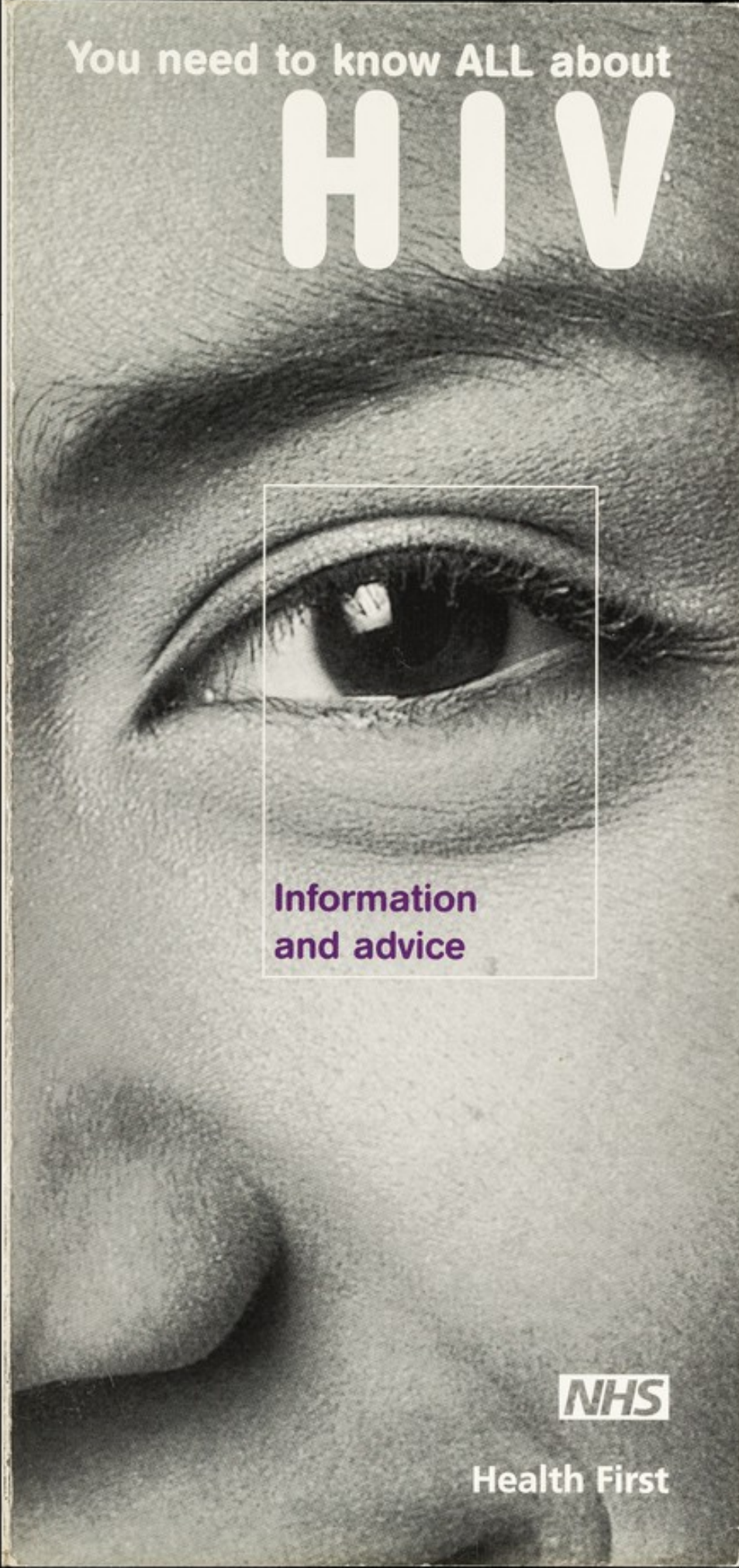
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You need to know ALL about

HIV



Information
and advice

NHS

Health First

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

There is no cure for HIV, it stays in your body after you get it. However you can get treatment for HIV and the illnesses it causes.

You can get a test to see if you have HIV.

You can have HIV and feel completely well and look healthy. For this reason many people do not know they have got HIV. The only way they can be sure is to have a test for HIV.

Both men and women can get HIV.

You CANNOT get HIV from:

- kissing, hugging, touching or shaking hands
- sharing cups, plates or knives and forks
- swimming pools
- toilet seats
- insect or animal bites
- sharing food

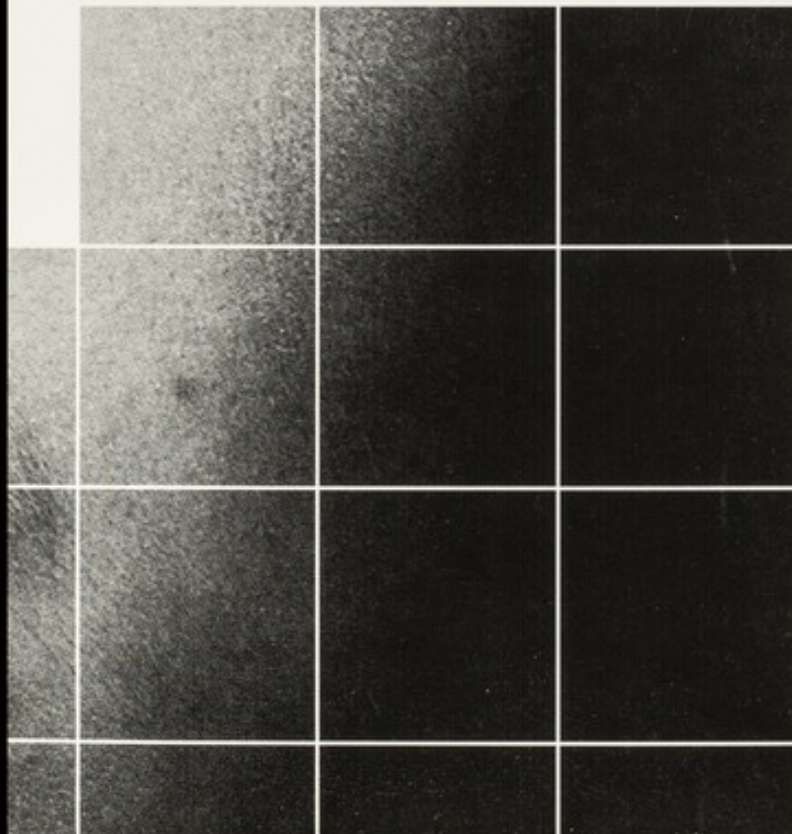


You can get HIV in these ways:

- having unprotected vaginal or anal sex (sex without a condom) with someone who already has HIV
- having oral sex without a condom, especially if you have bleeding gums or mouth ulcers
- by using a needle or a syringe that is infected with HIV. This can happen when people are injecting drugs and sharing needles
- women who have HIV can pass HIV on to their baby before it is born or while it is being born. However you can have HIV and give birth to a baby that does not have HIV. All pregnant women are offered an HIV test

You can get more than one sexually transmitted infection at the same time.

Condoms can help protect you from most sexually transmitted infections and help avoid pregnancy.



What happens if I have HIV?

Many people with HIV eventually get ill. HIV damages the system in your body that stops you getting ill (your immune system). Gradually the immune system finds it difficult to prevent certain illnesses.



If you have HIV you can take tablets and medicine that will help stop HIV damaging your immune system.

Some people with HIV can get AIDS. HIV and AIDS are different. AIDS means Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. You have AIDS when HIV gives you certain serious illnesses.

How do I protect myself against HIV?

Using a condom is the best way to protect yourself against HIV.

When you use a condom remember to:

- not use a condom that is past its 'use by' date, which is written on the packet
- only use condoms that have this on the side  
- use a new condom each time you have sex
- put a condom on before your genitals (penis and vagina) touch

Condoms come in all shapes and sizes, so find the best one for you.

If you want to get an HIV test

You can go to a sexual health clinic for a check up. You can ring for an appointment. At the clinic staff may ask you to take a simple blood test. If you have HIV you will be able to get lots of advice and support from the clinic. There are also lots of organisations that give help and support to people who have HIV.

For names and addresses of sexual health clinics call:

Sexwise 0800 28 29 30

Sexual Health Information Line 0800 567 123

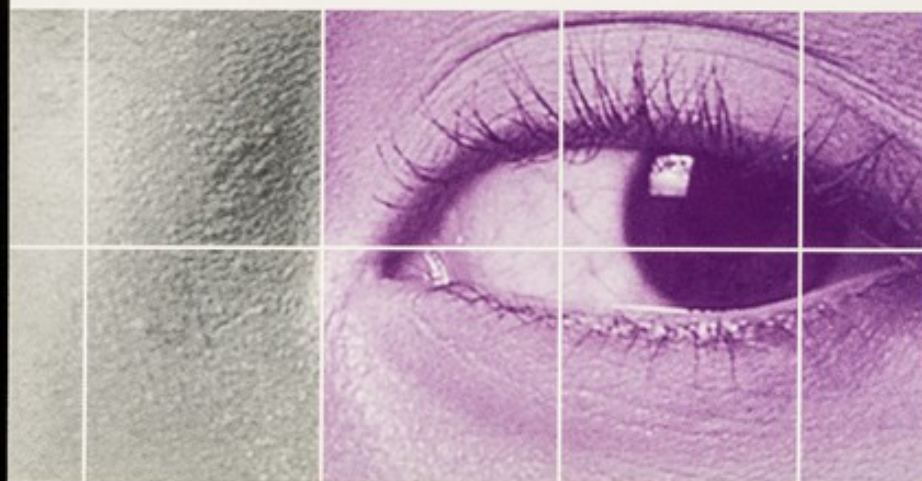
NHS Direct 0845 4647

check out www.ruthinking.co.uk and

www.playingsafely.co.uk

Sexual health clinics are free and confidential. Staff cannot tell anyone you have visited the clinic without your permission unless they believe you or someone else is in serious danger.

If you have a sexual partner, try talking to them about testing. This may be difficult but it is important, especially if the test tells you that you have HIV. Some family doctors (GPs) also do tests for HIV.



Questions you should ask at the clinic

At the clinic, the staff want to make sure you get the best treatment possible. So when you are at the clinic you should always ask the nurse or doctor:

1 – what is wrong with me?

2 – what do I need to do?

3 – why should I do it?

Their answers will help you to know what to do to get better and stay healthy.

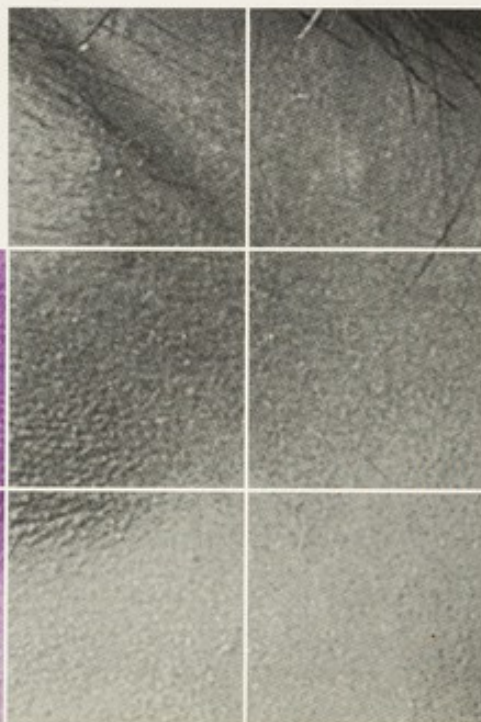
If you want to know more about HIV or want any further help and advice call

Sexual Health Information Line

0800 567 123 or THT Direct 0845 1221 200.

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