

## **Sex + drugs +AIDS : info for drug users / Coventry CDT.**

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### **Publication/Creation**

[between 1985 and 1990?]

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/jv356rau>

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## SAFER SEX

**T**he other way you can become infected with HIV is through sexual contact. Having unprotected sex increases your risk of becoming infected with HIV. Change to safer sex and avoid high risk activities. This means using a condom to reduce the risks of HIV being passed to a partner.

### The Pill cannot protect you against HIV

HIV affects women in specific ways. If you have HIV and become pregnant there's some risk of having an infected baby. Remember

**“SAFER SEX  
CAN BE FUN!”**

Have you tried hugging, massage, body-to-body rubbing, stroking, etc.

## ↑ WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE? ↓

### 1 KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: THE AIDS TEST

No-one can forcibly test you. You should not be tested without your knowledge or “informed” consent; this means you should discuss fully the reasons for the test and what the results could mean for you. If you are tested the results should remain confidential.

### 2 IF YOU ARE AT RISK OR CONSIDERING HAVING THE TEST,

Then talk to someone as the consequences can be serious whatever the result – (see list over).

### 3 WHAT THE TEST MEANS

It shows if you have been infected with HIV at some time and produced antibodies to the virus. The test can't show for sure that you haven't been infected by the virus.

### HIV- (NEGATIVE) RESULT

Only shows that the test has not found antibodies to HIV but the virus could be present and detected at a later date if you have recently been at risk of infection.

### HIV+ (POSITIVE) RESULT

Shows you have been infected by HIV and you can pass the virus onto others. It doesn't show if you will develop AIDS. You will need to have someone for support as a positive result can cause emotional problems, job loss, difficulties with housing and insurance.

## WHO TO TALK TO

### 1 LOCAL DRUG SERVICE/NEEDLE EXCHANGE

COVENTRY C.D.T.  
2 DOVER ST. TEL 0203 553845  
MON-FRI.

### 2 THE HEALTH ADVISOR / AIDS COUNSELLOR AT THE GU CLINIC

COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE HOSPITAL  
TEL 0203 520677 MON-FRI.

### 3 LOCAL AIDSLINE

### 4 NATIONAL AGENCIES

Mainliners Helpline 01-738 7333 (10am - 6pm)  
Positively Women – Contact SHEILA on 01-671 4469  
Terrence Higgins Trust Helpline 01-242 1010 (3 - 10pm daily)  
Black Community Aids Team (B.C.A.T.) 01-671 7611 (10am - 5pm)  
NATIONAL AIDSLINE 0800 567 123  
SCODA (Standing Conference on Drug Abuse) 01-430 2341

Published by Coventry CDT, Tel. 553845

GVA 3085 T6 2 89

**SEX  
+  
DRUGS  
+  
ROCK & ROLL  
AIDS**

**info for  
drug users**



## WHAT IS AIDS??

**AIDS** like the common cold, is caused by a virus. This virus is called the "Human Immunodeficiency Virus" or HIV for short. Its effects are very different from other viruses. HIV attacks the body's defence system which protects you from illness.

If you become infected with HIV your body may no longer be able to fight off minor illnesses, so infections can become very serious. You may develop AIDS; an illness that can cause up to 20 diseases, some of which cause death, but it is not known how many will eventually develop AIDS.

## HOW TO REDUCE THE RISKS OF INFECTION

**M**any people who are infected with HIV don't even know it. They look and feel well, so maybe they don't think that they are at risk. Sharing your works or having unprotected sex with partners increases the risk of infection. The best advice is

**DON'T INJECT DRUGS X**  
**CHECK OUT SAFER SEX ✓**

If you continue to inject drugs, start using safer injecting methods and having safer sex.

## SAFER INJECTING

**I**njecting drugs is risky, especially "street" drugs and those not meant for injection. If you inject drugs, then take care of yourself and others by making these changes:

Avoid sharing works or other equipment – only use your own works. Flush out the syringe each time you use.

Better still: Try to use a new set of works each time you inject. Get rid of your used works safely, so no one else can use them eg. in a can or "coke tin".

Use different veins to reduce damage;

Avoid using your groin. It's very dangerous as you have a vein, artery and nerve very close together.

Try to find a reliable supply of clean works eg. a needle exchange scheme or local chemist and get rid of your used works safely so no-one else can use them.

Don't hassle chemists who refuse to sell to you – go elsewhere.

## HOW YOU BECOME INFECTED

**HIV** is not easily passed to others. It is found in blood, "cum" (semen) and vaginal fluids. So you can only become infected in a few ways. HIV is usually passed on by having sex with an infected person.

Drug users who inject are doubly at risk. You can become infected by;

**Having SEX with someone who is infected .**  
**or**  
**Sharing WORKS with someone who has the VIRUS.**

Sharing any of the works – barrel, needles, spoon etc – increases your risk of infection with HIV, Hepatitis B, septicaemia and other types of blood poisoning.

HIV may be present even if the works have been flushed out, especially if any blood inside has dried.

REMEMBER: Always flush out your works. Sharing is NEVER safe.

If works are ever shared, doing the following will greatly reduce your chances of HIV etc. It doesn't make it safe to share.

**STRAIGHT AFTER USE, FLUSH OUT WORKS WITH THICK, HOUSEHOLD BLEACH, IN A BOWL.**



**OR, USE A MIXTURE OF WASHING-UP LIQUID & COLD WATER IN A BOWL. AVOID WARM WATER AS THIS MAKES BLOOD HARDER TO REMOVE.**

**FLUSH OUT A FEW TIMES BUT NOT BACK INTO THE BOWL. REMOVE ANY TRACES OF BLOOD.**



**FINALLY, FLUSH OUT, WITH CLEAN WATER. IF POSSIBLE SOAK DISMANTLED WORKS FOR A FEW MINUTES IN HOT WATER THAT HAS JUST BOILED (80°C). ALL OTHER EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE BOILED.**

