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**Contributors**

Great Britain. Department of Health

**Publication/Creation**

1996.

**Persistent URL**

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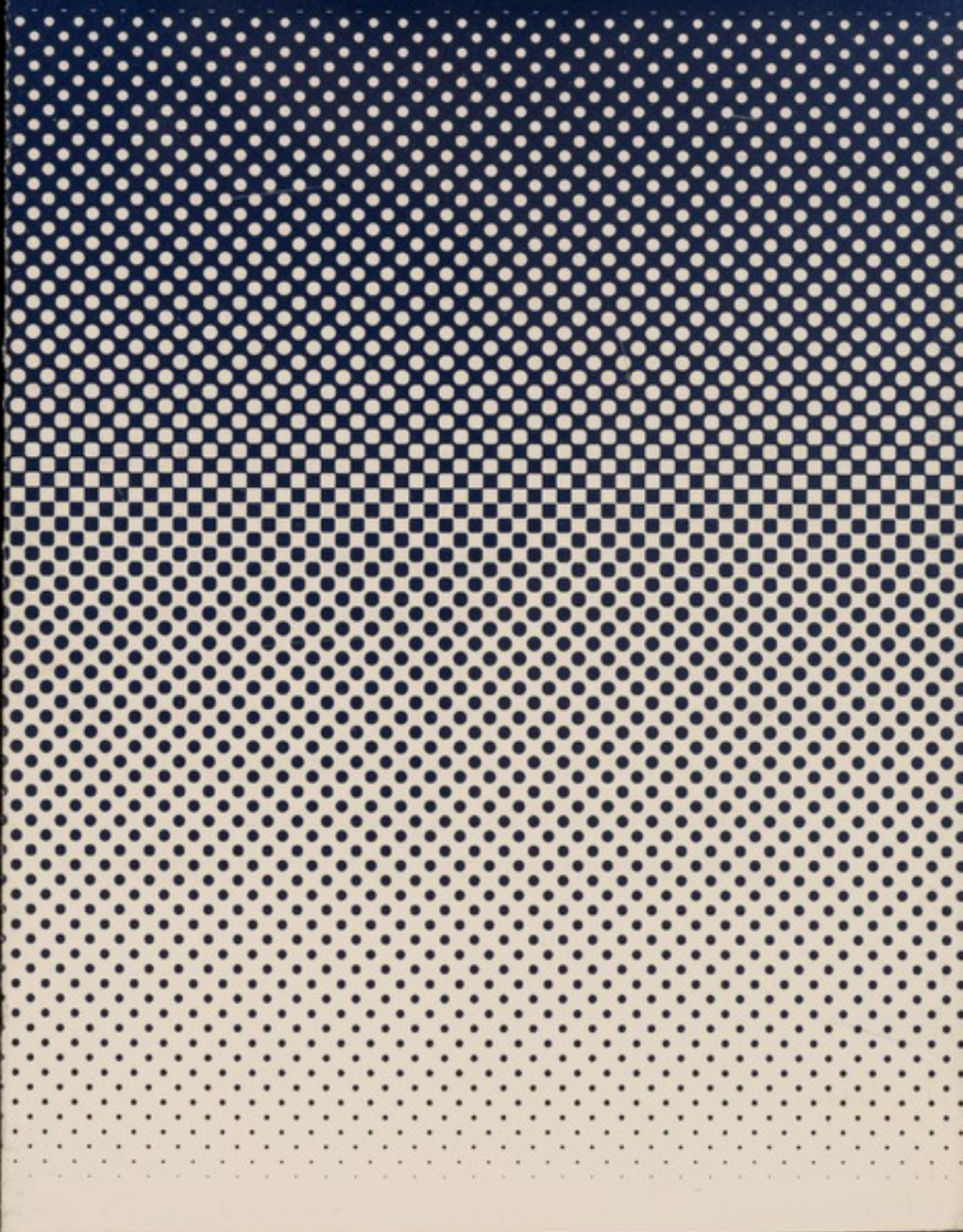
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# **keep safe**

Practical, everyday advice for HIV-  
infected people and their carers





## **What are the important facts about HIV transmission?**

This leaflet explains what is known about HIV transmission and offers practical, everyday advice on day to day contact.

## **How can HIV be transmitted from a person with HIV to another person?**

For HIV transmission to take place, material infected with HIV (for instance blood, semen, vaginal secretions, or breast milk) must be transferred from one person's body into another person's body.

- HIV is transmitted by unprotected sex, if a condom is not used, through transfer of semen or vaginal fluids.
- HIV can be transmitted between injecting drug users who share needles or syringes, and can be transmitted if blood products for transfusion are infected with HIV. Nowadays in

the UK all blood donations are tested for HIV (as well as hepatitis B and hepatitis C, two other viruses which can be carried in the blood) so the risk of being infected with HIV in this way is remote.

- HIV can be transmitted from an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, while giving birth or through breast feeding.
- HIV can – occasionally – be transmitted by contact with blood (or, in very rare cases, other body fluids) through broken or inflamed skin. This might occur when mopping up by hand a spillage of blood or other body fluids.
- It is possible that HIV may be transmitted through sharing of toothbrushes or razors, if contaminated with blood.

HIV is NOT TRANSMITTED through intact skin or by normal domestic contact, eg holding hands, kissing, cuddling, sharing bathrooms and toilets, and sharing crockery and kitchen utensils.

Urine, faeces, saliva, sputum (spit), tears, sweat and vomit are not considered to pose a risk of HIV infection, unless they are contaminated with blood, although some of these examples may be risky for other reasons.



## **How can HIV infection be prevented from spreading?**

Infection can be prevented if everyone remembers to follow a few simple precautions, every time there may be a risk. This will also help reduce the spread of other blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C. NOWADAYS THIS IS JUST COMMON SENSE. Even children need to be taught to follow these precautions.

## **What precautions should be taken?**

- Be careful with body fluids and avoid touching them – buy disposable gloves and use them, every time, when you may need to touch someone else's blood or body fluids. See advice on accidents below. Disposable gloves can be bought at most pharmacies.
- Always wash your hands before and after giving first aid or clearing up blood or other body fluids.

- Buy household bleach to disinfect and clean up spills of blood or other fluids/materials which may be infected. Keep the bleach in a safe place.
- Teach children about the risks of contact with other people's blood as soon as they are able to understand how to protect themselves.
- Never share toothbrushes and razors.
- When washing linen or clothing which may be soiled with infected material, use the hot wash cycle in your washing machine.
- Waste disposal: small soiled items such as tissues and tampons can be flushed down the toilet. Larger items soiled with material which may be infected should be sealed securely in plastic bags for disposal.
- Protect your skin: always keep cuts or broken skin covered with waterproof dressings and take extra care not to come into contact with blood or body fluids.



## **ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN!**

### **What should we do if there is a spillage of blood or body fluids?**

- Wear disposable gloves if possible.
- Use absorbent paper towels to cover the spillage.
- Pour diluted bleach (1 part bleach to 10 parts water) on to the paper towels and leave it for at least 2 minutes before wiping up. Where it is not appropriate to use bleach (for instance to disinfect a small spill on a carpet or clothing), hot soapy water is a reasonable alternative.

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G27/004 3757 IP 40k Mar 96 (03)