

**AIDS : more facts for gay men : remember, anal sex carries the highest risk.
The more men you have unsafe sex with, the greater your chance of
getting AIDS / The Terrence Higgins Trust.**

Contributors

Terrence Higgins Trust

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

AIDS

MORE FACTS FOR GAY MEN



REMEMBER

ANAL SEX CARRIES THE HIGHEST RISK
THE MORE MEN YOU HAVE UNSAFE SEX WITH, THE
GREATER YOUR CHANCE OF GETTING AIDS.

THE
TERRENCE HIGGINS TRUST
HELPLINE

01-242 1010

3pm - 10pm DAILY

Our leaflet 'AIDS - THE FACTS' which you should also have been given or can get from the Trust, will tell you the basic facts about AIDS. As a gay or bisexual man you need to know more.

SAFER SEX

You can catch HIV (the virus which may lead to AIDS) through having sex. We want to tell you how you can reduce this risk.

The virus is passed on when semen or blood from an infected person enters the body of an uninfected person. This happens most easily through the anus. Saliva has not been shown to pass on the virus.

It is known that the risk of being infected with HIV is reduced by having fewer sexual partners. However certain forms of sexual activity carry a much higher risk of transmitting HIV than others, and more protection can be achieved by enjoying safer sex activities.

Various sexual practices can be ranked according to their estimated risk. **"Very low risk"** activities carry next to no risk of transmitting HIV as the risk remains a theoretical one. **"Low risk"** activities could pass on HIV but in comparison to those in the **"High risk"** group are MUCH less likely to do so.

SAFER SEX is considered to be that in the **"No risk"** and **"Very low risk"** groups.

NO RISK

Solo masturbation

Touching and massage away from the genital area (penis, vagina or anus)

Sex toys (dildo, vibrator, etc.) used on your own and kept for your own exclusive use

Enemas and douches done by yourself to yourself

VERY LOW RISK

Mutual or group masturbation

Kissing away from the genitals ("wet" or "dry")

Bondage, beating, whipping and spanking as long as the skin is not broken

Sex toys when used with a partner, as long as each item is not shared

Penis to body contact

Urination ("water sports" or "golden showers")

LOW RISK

Sex toys if shared with others

Fingering (putting one or more fingers into the vagina or anus)

Cunnilingus (a man or woman tonguing a woman's vagina).

This is more risky during a period.

Fellatio ("cock sucking"). Coming inside the mouth may increase the risk

Anilingus ("rimming") – a man or a woman tonguing someone's anal area

Fisting or fist-fucking – putting a hand, fist or forearm into the rectum

HIGH RISK

Vaginal or anal intercourse (fucking or screwing).

Withdrawal before coming is unlikely to be safer

Any sex act that draws blood from the genital area (penis, vagina or anus), or that pierces the skin

Enemas and douches used before or after anal or vaginal sex

Condoms

In vaginal or anal sex, condoms may offer some worthwhile protection. Condoms were designed for vaginal sex and when used for this will offer reasonable protection. Other methods should be used IN ADDITION to provide more reliable contraception. In anal sex condoms tear or fall off more often and therefore offer less protection.

Withdrawal before ejaculation is a useful additional safeguard (but not very safe when attempted without a condom).

Spermicides containing nonoxynol (such as Duragel, Orthocrema or Delfen cream) have been suggested as a further safeguard if used with a condom. They cannot be recommended for anal sex, since they may irritate the rectum.

All lubricants used with condoms should be **water-based** (such as KY and 1-2-1). Grease based lubricants (such as Vaseline, Crisco, baby oil, cooking oil, butter, etc.) rapidly damage the rubber of the condom so that it stops offering protection.

IS THERE A TEST FOR AIDS?

Briefly – no.

There is a test available in clinics which will tell if you have been infected with HIV. So far most people with HIV have stayed well, some have developed minor illnesses and only a minority have developed the serious conditions of AIDS. This test (the HIV antibody test) will **not** tell you whether you will become ill.

BUT people who get a positive test result are very likely to be infectious and should **always** take precautions to avoid passing infection on to others. For gay men this means safer sex.

If you don't have the test done, you must accept that there is a chance that you **could** be infectious to others. Again safer sex is the only safe way.

There are arguments both for and against having this test done. Many people find a positive result very hard to cope with, however strong they are, but some may benefit from treatments which are now becoming available. Read the Trust leaflet 'HIV Antibody; to test or not to test?', and discuss it with our helpline or your local AIDS phonenumber if you have any doubts. Do this **before** you have the test done.

What if you have had sex with some one who develops AIDS?

Your risk of illness is small. Talk to a doctor at a sexually transmitted disease (VD) clinic. If you are offered the HIV antibody test, don't decide straight away. Read the Trust leaflet or talk to the helpline (see the section on "Is there a test for AIDS?").

What if you are HIV Antibody Positive?

Firstly and most importantly remember that this does not mean you will become ill.

You are very likely to be infectious to others if you have 'unsafe' sex with them. 'Safer sex' could save their lives.

You will probably need a lot of support and information, both of which can be hard to come by at this critical time. The Terrence Higgins Trust exists to provide these and can also put you in touch with Body Positive, or a local support group.

Go back to the clinic which did your test. They should be prepared to help you with your problems. If not, ask us which ones will.

HOW CAN YOU OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT AIDS?

This leaflet has been compiled by The Terrence Higgins Trust with the help and advice of doctors.

If you need further information, you can write to the Trust at 52-54 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8JU. Please send a stamped self-addressed 9" x 6" envelope. You can also telephone the Trust's AIDS Helpline 01-242 1010 between 3pm-10pm daily. For the deaf and hard of hearing, we operate a special service: VISTEL: 01-405 2463 between 7pm-10pm daily.

Haemophiliacs requiring further information may prefer to call the Haemophiliacs Society on 01-928 2020 between 8.30 am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. An answer-phone is in operation on both the above lines when the offices are closed.

**REMEMBER: NOT TO DONATE
BLOOD OR SEMEN OR CARRY AN
ORGAN DONOR CARD**



The Terrence Higgins Trust

*A registered charity to inform, advise and help on A I D S
(Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).*

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Terrence Higgins Trust
52-54 Grays Inn Road
London WC1X 8JU
Helpline: 01-242 1010

Admin: 01-831 0330 Vistel: 01-405 2463