

**The best defense against AIDS is information / San Francisco AIDS Foundation.**

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▶ The best  
defense against  
**AIDS** is  
**INFORMATION.**

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Dear Friend:

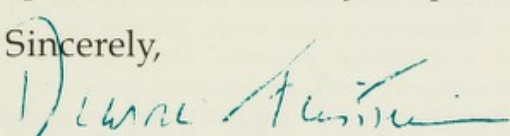
AIDS is everyone's concern, regardless of sex, race, or sexual orientation. Your knowledge is the key to separating the facts from the fiction. This brochure provides important facts that you should know.

The myths and misconceptions about AIDS have caused needless panic and concern. There is no reason for most people to become burdened by feelings of fear. By learning about AIDS you can help dispel any myths you may hear, as well as provide sensitivity and concern to those who have been diagnosed or who are in "high-risk" groups.

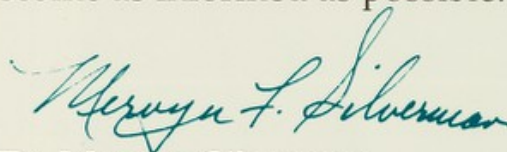
San Francisco has been a leader in fighting AIDS, having allocated over \$6.5 million dollars in city funding and research, patient care and public education. Additionally, our city's representatives in Sacramento and Washington are among the leaders in the crucial efforts to make AIDS research a priority of the federal government.

As Co-Chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayor's Task Force on AIDS and President-Elect of the U.S. Conference of Local Public Health Officials, we will continue to do all that we can to battle this public health epidemic. Please do your part and become as informed as possible.

Sincerely,



**Dianne Feinstein**  
Mayor of San Francisco  
Co-Chair, U.S. Conference of  
Mayors Task Force on AIDS



**Dr. Mervyn Silverman**  
Health Director, San Francisco  
President-Elect, U.S. Conference  
of Local Public Health Officials

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Arm yourself with the *facts* about AIDS. ►

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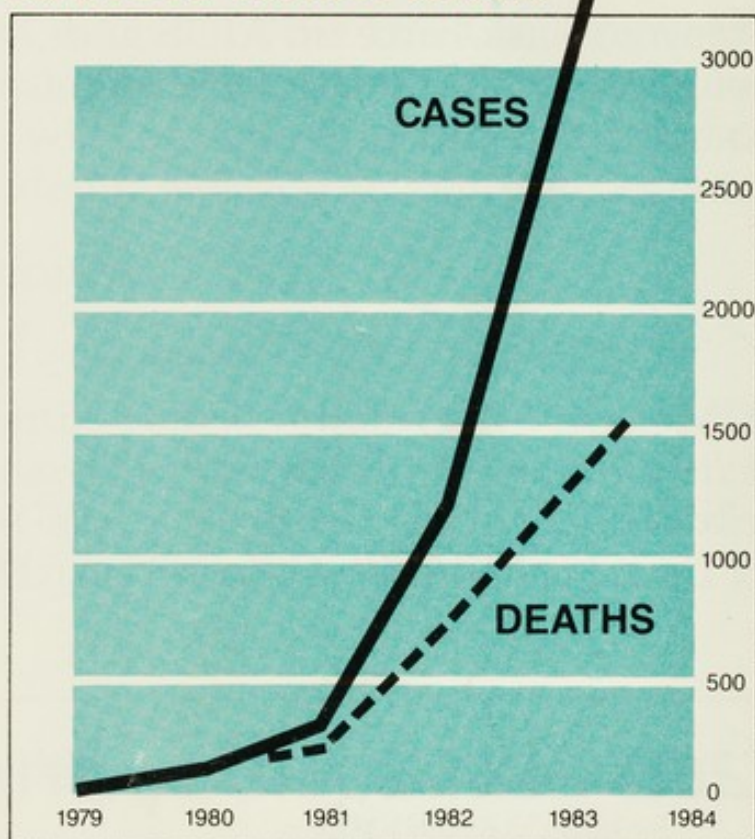
## ► What AIDS is.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

It was first identified as a disease in the United States in 1981 among gay communities in New York and Los Angeles. The number of cases has risen greatly since then — and continues to rise (see chart). Today it is considered the most serious public health threat in the nation by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

AIDS is a mysterious disease which causes a breakdown in the body's immune system, resulting in the impairment of the self-defense mechanism to fight certain diseases. This breakdown leaves the body vulnerable to attack from infections and diseases which normally do not infect healthy people. The diseases which most often accompany AIDS are Kaposi's Sarcoma (a rare form of cancer) and pneumocystis pneumonia

### NATIONAL AIDS CASES



Source: Centers for Disease Control, December 22, 1983

(an uncommon infection of the lungs).

Researchers believe that the probable cause of AIDS is a type of virus (called a retrovirus) which changes the structure of the cells it attacks. Researchers have not yet confirmed a theory of contagion nor found a "cure" for AIDS, although there has been progress in the treatment of some of the diseases which result from AIDS.

Evidence strongly suggests that AIDS is transmitted through direct contact with body fluid such as blood or semen passed during intimate sexual activity, through the sharing of needles, and possibly through the transfer of blood products.

The mortality rate is very high. Over 80% of diagnosed cases have died within two years after the appearance of symptoms.

## Who is at risk.

The general population is *not* at risk for AIDS. Nearly all AIDS cases have occurred among certain "high-risk" population groups. AIDS is *not* highly contagious — and it is *not* spread through casual social contact.

Approximately 71% of the AIDS cases diagnosed nationally are gay or bisexual men, while these two groups comprise about 98% of the cases reported in San Francisco. Other high-risk groups are: intravenous drug users, Haitian immigrants and hemophiliac patients. Only a very small percentage of cases are reported in persons who either do not have these risk factors, or for whom risk information is not completely known.

Members of these high-risk groups need to be very cautious, but people outside these groups need not worry about getting AIDS.

If you don't fit into the high-risk categories (and your job doesn't require infection control procedures), your major concern should be being knowledgeable about AIDS, *not* the fear of contagion. All research strongly indicates that AIDS is *not* casually contagious. Being near, eating with, or touching a person with AIDS or a healthy member of the high risk groups does not pose any risk of contracting the disease.

## AIDS SYMPTOMS

Many symptoms associated with AIDS may appear in illnesses that are not caused by AIDS such as colds, bronchitis, and stomach flu. However, persistence of one or more of the following symptoms should be discussed with a doctor who is familiar with AIDS.

- Unexplained increasing and persistent fatigue.
- Periodic or regular fevers, shaking chills, drenching night sweats not accompanied by a known illness and lasting longer than several weeks.
- Weight loss that is unexpected and greater than approximately ten pounds in less than two months.
- Otherwise unexplained swollen glands (enlarging lymph nodes with or without pain, usually in the neck, armpits or groin) lasting for more than two weeks.
- Pink to purple flat or raised blotches or bumps, usually painless, occurring on or under the skin, inside the mouth, nose, eyelids, or rectum. Initially, they may look like bruises that do not go away and they usually are harder than the skin around them.
- Persistent or often dry cough that is not from smoking and has lasted too long to be from a usual respiratory infection.
- Persistent diarrhea.

**We all can be part  
of the solution.**

**Whether or not you are a member  
of a high-risk group...**

Everyone should be informed about AIDS so that sensitivity and understanding are foremost during this time of crisis. AIDS has caused great emotional stress among the affected communities

— and has heighten fears and prejudices among the general population.

If you have friends, family members, neighbors, or co-workers who are among the high-risk groups or who have been diagnosed with AIDS, you can support and help them at no risk to yourself.

You may also want to get involved in community activities surrounding AIDS. Contact the San Francisco AIDS Foundation office at (415) 864-4376.

### **If you are a member of a high-risk group...**

There are many specific things you can do to protect yourself and reduce your risk of contracting AIDS. Suggestions are available from the San Francisco AIDS Foundation — by phone, brochure, or seminar. For information, call one of the numbers listed below.

You should be informed about AIDS and alert to the symptoms (see box), have good medical insurance, and see a physician regularly.

## **Resources for help are available.**

If you think you have AIDS symptoms, want information, or need to talk to someone about AIDS, call...

**San Francisco AIDS Hotline**  
863-AIDS

**Toll Free Northern California AIDS Hotline**  
800-FOR-AIDS

**Public Health Service National Hotline**  
800-342-AIDS

# **San Francisco AIDS Foundation.**

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation was established in June, 1982 to meet a number of pressing needs generated by the onset of the AIDS Epidemic. The Foundation's services include:

- **Information and Referral Services** — through its San Francisco and Northern California toll-free hotlines, the Foundation provides up-to-date and accurate information on all aspects of AIDS and medical and psychological referrals to AIDS-sensitive providers.

- **Education and Literature** — through its Speakers Bureau, community forum programs, health professional seminars and a wide variety of literature, the Foundation educates the populations at risk, the general population and health care providers about AIDS.

- **Direct Services for People with AIDS** — through its Social Work Program, the Foundation assists people with AIDS in accessing various social service programs.

- **Media Relations.**
- **Support for Research.**
- **Fundraising.**
- **Government Relations.**
- **Deaf Services.**

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation is a contract agency of the San Francisco Department of Public Health and the State of California Department of Health Services.

*Donations and volunteers are always needed in order to continue the many services of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.*

**San Francisco AIDS Foundation**

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