

Your public health nurse or health care professional can help and support you to gain control over this virus.

For More Information

• More information about safer sex and risk reduction can be obtained by calling the Sexual Health Centre (905) 688-3817 or the following contacts:

• **AIDS Niagara** at (905) 984-8684

• **AIDS & Sexual Health Information Line** at 1-800-668-2437

Other Resources

• **Kid's Helpline** at 1-800-668-6868

• **Drug and Alcohol Info Line** at 1-800-463-6273

• **StreetWorks, needle exchange program** at 905-984-8684

THE SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRES ARE LOCATED AT:

Fort Erie Sexual Health Centre

43 Hagey Avenue
Fort Erie, ON L2A 1W4
Phone: 905-871-5320
Fax: 905-871-3333

Hours of Service

Tuesday - Friday
9am - 12pm

Niagara Falls Sexual Health Centre

5710 Kitchener Street
Niagara Falls, ON L2G 1C1
Phone: 905-358-3636
Fax: 905-358-2717

Hours of Service

Monday - Friday
1pm - 4:30pm

St. Catharines Sexual Health Centre

277 Welland Avenue
St. Catharines, ON L2R 2P7
Phone: 905-688-3817
Toll Free: 1-800-263-5757
Fax: 905-688-6063

Hours of Service

Monday - Friday
8:30am - 12pm
1pm - 4:30pm

Welland Sexual Health Centre

540 King Street
Welland, ON L3B 3L1
Phone: 905-734-1014
Fax: 905-734-1770

Hours of Service

Monday - Friday
1pm - 4:30pm

** Clinic/Doctor services available by appointment only*

Mediklik - STI Clinic

St. Catharines General Hospital
142 Queenston Street, St. Catharines, ON
Tuesday & Thursdays - 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Walk-in Clinic - no appointment required

www.regional.niagara.on.ca



THE BASIC FACTS ABOUT HIV/AIDS

What is HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV attacks the body's immune system. Over time the immune system is weakened and an HIV-infected person can become sick with different illnesses.

What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. AIDS is the advanced stage of HIV disease.



Niagara  **Region**
PUBLIC HEALTH

I CAN NOT get infected by:

- Abstaining from sex
- Casual, everyday contact
- Shaking hands
- Hugging and kissing
- Body to body touching
- Coughing, sneezing
- Giving blood
- Using swimming pools, toilet seats
- Sharing bed linen, eating utensils, food
- Mosquitos and other insects, animals

If you think that HIV/AIDS only affects gay men or injection drug users, you're wrong. You are not protected from HIV because you are straight, or young, or a woman, or living in a rural area.

**You don't get HIV because of who you are, or where you live.
You get HIV by what you do.**

Safer or low risk activities?

- Safer sex prevents contact with semen, vaginal fluids or blood. Talk to your partner about safer sex before having sex.
- Use a latex condom correctly every time you have sex.
- **DO NOT SHARE** personal hygiene items (razors, toothbrushes).

I CAN get infected by:

- Penile-vaginal intercourse, without a condom.
- Penile-anal intercourse, without condom.
- Coitus interruptus (intercourse with withdrawal before ejaculation).
- Sharing of needles or sharp instruments for any purpose.
- Tattooing or piercing – HIV can be passed when tiny, invisible particles of blood stay on equipment that has not been well sterilized. These particles can also stay in the tattoo ink. The safest way to get a tattoo or piercing is to go to a professional.

ALSO, during pregnancy, at birth or through breastfeeding, an infected mother can pass the virus to her child.

How do I know I am infected?

Over time the body produces antibodies to fight the HIV virus. A blood test can tell if you have these antibodies which show you are infected. Antibodies can take up to 14 weeks after infection to show.

What happens if I am infected?

The Course of HIV Infection

After infection, people may not feel or look sick for years. However, they can still pass HIV to others.

Over time the nervous and immune systems become damaged and HIV-infected people become sick with different illnesses.

For people living with advanced HIV infection or AIDS, their immune and nervous systems are weak. They get diseases, such as infections or cancers, which can kill them.

Before you have sex...talk about it!