

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Q Can you contract HIV from any bodily fluid?

A. No. There are only four bodily fluids that carry the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) with a high enough viral load to infect a partner. Those four fluids are blood, semen (including pre-cum), breast milk, and vaginal secretions. Other fluids such as urine, tears, sweat, and saliva do not have a high enough virus content for infection.

There are 5 activities that can put you at risk for contracting HIV: sexual intercourse (oral, anal, or vaginal), sharing needles, mother-to-child transmission during childbirth, blood transfusions (which is extremely rare), and work exposure for those who work in the healthcare field.

What's the best way to protect yourself against HIV? Know your status and the status of your partner. Use barrier methods such as condoms or latex dams each and every time you have sex. If you are using needles, don't share or use

someone else's. LifePoint is a local syringe-exchange program where people can bring their used needles and exchange them for clean ones – no questions asked. If you are an HIV+ woman and are pregnant or plan to have children in the future, there are antiretroviral therapies you can take during your pregnancy to lower transmission risk to 2% or less. If you work in the healthcare field, always use universal precautions.

Remember, everyone has an HIV status. The only way to know yours is to get tested. As of August 1, 2012, the Affordable Care Act eliminates the co-pay for women's HIV testing. Depending on the insurance plan's effective date, many women can get tested with no out of pocket cost. The Campus Health Service offers confidential HIV testing all year round. To make an appointment, call (520) 621-9202.



Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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