

# HIV: a 2016 update

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HIV is the virus that can cause AIDS.

HIV can be spread by injecting drug use; this may happen if someone uses a needle or syringe previously used by someone with HIV. Sharing other injecting equipment including cookers (e.g. spoons or stericups), filters, or water also carries a risk of HIV.

**Recently in the UK there have been a number of HIV outbreaks amongst people who inject drugs; it is very important that anyone injecting drugs protects themselves.**

HIV can also be spread by unprotected sex (sex without condoms).

**The risks associated with unprotected sex are high amongst men who have sex with men, or where sex with different partners is common.**

HIV can be diagnosed with a simple test; your drugs worker, drugs service, GP or your local GUM or sexual health service will be able to arrange an HIV test.

HIV is treatable; however it is important to diagnose HIV early as this improves the effectiveness of treatment. There is no vaccine to protect against getting HIV.

## THE RISKS OF CATCHING HIV CAN BE REDUCED BY:

- **Always using clean needles and syringes**
- **Always using clean cookers (spoons, stericups), clean filters and clean water**
- **Not sharing ANY drug injecting equipment**
- **Using condoms**