

To transmit HIV, a fluid such as semen/cum, pre-cum, vaginal fluid, rectal fluid, blood, and sometimes, breastmilk must go through a mucous membrane, meaning that the fluid must enter: the mouth, penis, vagina, rectum, or an open wound.

HIV cannot be acquired from a swimming pool, or a toilet seat, or by kissing. HIV is only transmitted when genital fluids or blood from a person with HIV directly enter another person's body. HIV has never been transmitted through urine/pee or feces/poop.

DEBUNKED
You could get HIV from a swimming pool.

DEBUNKED
HIV only affects gay men.

HIV can affect **anyone** regardless of sexual orientation or gender. HIV is usually transmitted by sharing genital fluids during sex. But HIV can also be transmitted through the blood by sharing needles when injecting drugs. Some people living with HIV are **lifetime survivors**, which means HIV was acquired in utero or while breastfeeding.



BTW, it is impossible to transmit HIV through kissing, and do so through oral sex. Condoms are very effective at preventing transmission of HIV during sex. And, people with HIV can reach undetectable status by taking medication regularly, which means they cannot transmit HIV to their partners through sex—even without a condom. Remember: **undetectable = untransmittable!** PrEP and PEP are also great options for preventing HIV.

DEBUNKED
HIV will always be transmitted when someone living with HIV has sex.

BACK to BASICS

What is **HIV**?
Human immunodeficiency virus, "HIV," is a type of sexually transmitted infection, "STI." Without the right medical treatment, HIV can develop into acquired **immunodeficiency syndrome, "AIDS."** AIDS is an ongoing condition caused by a very weak immune system, AKA the body's "defense force" that fights off infections.

DEBUNKED
I thought **AIDS** was over!
HIV != AIDS. With access to anti-HIV treatments, HIV can be prevented from ever developing into AIDS. However, there is still **no cure** for HIV or AIDS, so **the epidemic is not over.** It is important to continue talking about HIV because there are many misconceptions and stereotypes that continue to harm people living with HIV.

PrEP is a medication that prevents HIV transmission through vaginas and transgender women. The need for PrEP depends on many factors, not just a person's gender identity and/or sexuality. PrEP is a medication that prevents HIV transmission through vaginas and transgender women. The need for PrEP depends on many factors, not just a person's gender identity and/or sexuality.

DEBUNKED
PrEP is only for men who have sex with men.

FACTS ARE
Sexy
DEBUNKING HIV Myths
GMHC
END AIDS. LIVE LIFE.

Actually, people living with an undetectable viral load of HIV can get pregnant, give birth, and breastfeed with only a 0.1% risk of passing HIV onto the baby. It is also safe and effective for pregnant and breastfeeding people to take PrEP.

DEBUNKED
People living with HIV can't have children.

Myths like these contribute to HIV stigma in our culture. Stigma creates tangible negative effects for people living with HIV and those who aren't. Stigma also creates barriers for accessing HIV prevention & treatment.

GLOSSARY
Undetectable: A term for when a person living with HIV can no longer transmit the virus through sex. This is achieved when a low enough level of HIV is present in blood after taking anti-HIV medication.
PrEP: Pre-exposure prophylaxis. A medication that prevents HIV transmission from sex taken by people not living with HIV.
PEP: Post-exposure prophylaxis. A medication that people living without HIV, who are not on PrEP, can take within 72 hours after being exposed to the virus.

For more information on HIV: **gmhc.org/resources**
For free & confidential HIV testing: **gmhc.org/testing**

