

# HIV/AIDS

## *What Is HIV/AIDS?*

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

## *How Do I Get HIV Infection?*

- People in Canada are still being infected with and spreading HIV.

HIV can pass from an infected person to you through:

- Contact with blood, semen, vaginal secretions or breast milk.
- Sex - including vaginal, anal, oral sex and sharing sex toys, etc.
- Pregnancy - from an infected mother to an unborn baby.
- Use or re-use of needles or syringes with traces of the blood of an infected person (e.g. tattooing, sharing needles, piercing).
- **Drug users who share needles are at a high risk of becoming infected.**
- HIV is not spread by casual contact such as hugging, shaking hands, sharing bathroom facilities, or on objects such as drinking fountains, telephones or clothing.
- The risk of infection through blood transfusion is low since, all blood and blood products are screened for HIV.

## *How Do I Get Tested?*

- Ask for a blood test for HIV from your doctor, STD or Family Planning Clinic. It is free and confidential.

## *How Can I Prevent The Spread Of HIV?*

- Abstinence (not having sex) may be your best choice.
- Practice "**Safer Sex**". Always use condoms. Avoid condoms with Nonoxynol-9, as this may cause skin irritation making it easier to get HIV.
- Limit the number of sexual partners you have.
- Ask your partner about his/her sexual history.
- If you think that you have been infected, get checked out.
- Get education, guidance and support.
- Avoid sex practices that cause injury to body tissues.
- Don't share sex toys.
- Never share IV needles or equipment.



- Be sure that instruments to be used on you for tattoos and body piercing have been sterilized.
- Learn and understand more about HIV/AIDS.
- If you ever find a needle or syringe, contact Safeworks or the Fire Department to pick it up.
- If you use IV drugs: Contact an Injection Drug Education and Prevention agency, such as Safeworks in Calgary, to find out about locations to exchange your used needles for clean ones and to learn more about how you can reduce your risk of getting HIV.

***For More Information Call:***

**Sexual and Reproductive Health** **944-7115**

**Family Planning Clinics**

- **Downtown** **323-7th Ave SE** **944-7111**
- **South** **31 Sunpark Plaza SE** **943-9510**
- **Sunridge** **406, 2675-36 Street NE** **944-7666**

**STD Clinic** **404-906 8th Ave SW** **944-7575**