

FURTHER INFORMATION / ADVICE:

aidshilfe-beratung.de | Telephone: 0180-33-19411* (Monday–Friday 9 am–9 pm, Saturday–Sunday 12 am–2 pm)

Impressum

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HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU HAVE BECOME INFECTED?

You cannot usually tell by looking at someone that they have HIV. Only an HIV test can tell you this. The best place to go for one is the public health department (“Gesundheitsamt”): you don’t need to give your name there, and the test is either free of charge or does not cost much (usually 10 to 15 Euros).

Before taking a test, you should get detailed advice, for example at an AIDS support centre (“Aidshilfe”). A small amount of blood is taken for the test, and it is then examined in a laboratory. After about a week you can collect the results in person. For some tests (rapid tests) you can get the results even earlier.

LIVING WITH HIV IN GERMANY

If it is found that someone has an HIV infection, this does not necessarily mean that they will get AIDS. On the contrary: they can then talk with an HIV doctor about when to start taking medication against HIV in order to prevent AIDS. If you don’t have health insurance, you can go to the public health department to get help anyway. If you are receiving treatment to combat HIV and are receiving care from an HIV doctor, it is possible to start a family and have healthy children.

And another thing: HIV infection does not affect residency status – it does not mean that you have to leave Germany. And with HIV, it is possible to work in almost all occupations.

ENGLISCH

WE TALK ABOUT IT
INFORMATION ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

aidshilfe.de

**Deutsche
AIDS-Hilfe**

WE TALK ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

Many people find it difficult to talk about HIV and AIDS because the subject is often taboo, and makes people anxious. We are going to talk about it anyway, in order to provide you with information. It may then be easier for you to talk about protection against HIV, for example with your partner or family.

This flyer provides the most important information about how the virus is transmitted, how you can protect yourself against it, the HIV test, and living with HIV in Germany. If you have any questions about these matters or would like some advice, you can find expert advisors at the local AIDS support centres ("Aidshilfe") (see last page).

WHAT IS HIV AND WHAT IS AIDS?

HIV is a virus. It weakens the immune system, with which the body fights off diseases. If someone has become infected and does not take medication in time, they can develop the life-threatening disease AIDS.

They can also pass on the virus to other people:

- **through vaginal intercourse / anal intercourse without a condom** (even if there is no ejaculation inside the body)
- **through oral sex**, if semen or menstrual blood get into the mouth
- **through drug use**, if syringes and needles are shared
- **from mother to child** (if the mother does not take any medication to combat HIV, or if she breastfeeds her baby).

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS?

- Use condoms for vaginal and anal intercourse. They provide protection from HIV and reduce the risk of catching other sexually transmitted infections.
- Take care not to get blood or semen in the mouth or body.
- When injecting drugs, only use your own injecting equipment, and do not pass used syringes on to others.
- Pregnant women with HIV can prevent passing the virus on to the baby by taking medication against HIV, receiving care from HIV specialists during the birth, and not breastfeeding.

NO RISK OF INFECTION FROM EVERYDAY LIFE

HIV is not easily transmitted, so there is no risk of infection in everyday life. You can quite happily live and work with other people, shake hands with them, hug them and kiss them, use the same toilets, baths and saunas, eat from the same plate, drink from the same glass, and use the same cutlery.

HIV is not transmitted through the air, through saliva, tears, sweat, urine, faeces or via insect bites.