

BOOKLET #3

HOW DOES SHARING WORKS SPREAD HIV ?

Sharing works (needles to inject drugs with) puts you at risk for getting infected with HIV. Weather needle and barrel (point and outfit) are your own or one that you have borrowed.

The HIV virus is spread among I.V. users primarily through the exchange of blood (you may not even be able to see it) which takes place while sharing hypodermic needles, syringes, cottons or other material used as a filter, and cookers or containers in witch the drugs are dissolved and or heated. Blood from the previous user lodges most often in the tip of the needle or syringe (barrel), but may also be found in other parts of the works. **HIV is about 0.00000047 inches in length. Millions of these viruses could fit on the period at the end of this sentence.**

During the injection, the user may draw his/her own blood into the syringe to mix with the dissolved drug and then inject the blood drug mixture, a procedure known as "booting". This is done so that all traces of the drug are injected efficiently. As a result, any blood from the prior user remains in the syringe or needle is injected directly into the subsequent users bloodstream.

Usually any cleaning of the syringe or needle only involves rinsing them with water or blowing into them. Sterilization equipment is not readily available to the users and the speed of the injection is often the only thing in the mind of the addict.

PROPER BLEACH CLEANING PROCEDURE

Sharing works with a partner, friend or lover on a regular basis is common in the drug world. Those who share are often "running partners". They commit crimes together and buy and use drugs together. Only one of the pair may carry the "works" and share it with the other, as both a convenience and a token of friendship. Injecting (fixing) together may also be a way of splitting an amount of drugs or a mutual protection mechanism were partners watch out for signs of overdose.

Sharing works in this fashion is an important social bond in the addicts world , and refusal to share may be seen as a serious sign of mistrust, or disloyalty among partners. Some sharing may also be from scarcity of needles. Users not necessarily as close as those described above may also share out of convenience. It doesn't matter if the people you share needles with "seem" healthy or if you have known them a long time, they could be infected with HIV and not even know it themselves.

PROSTITUTION AND HIV INFECTIONS

A large number of female and male IV drug users at least occasionally engage in prostitution as means of obtaining money for drugs. This creates the possibility that IV drug using prostitutes may spread the virus to their customers. At present, there seems to have been relatively little spread of the virus from HIV-Positive prostitutes to their customers in the United State.(19) This is in contrast to Africa, where heterosexual transmission from prostitutes to others is a major mode of HIV spreading.

Differences between the U.S. and African situations include much higher rate of other sexually transmitted diseases in Africa (including a high incidence of genital lesions), which are believed to facilitate transmission of HIV, and higher rates of "safe sex" practices among U.S. prostitutes which reduce the transmission of HIV research indicates.(18) The U.S. prostitutes began using safe sex practices in the early to mid 1970's in response to the spread of herpes. In general, the rate of female to male transmission is much lower in the United States than in Africa, where it appears to be almost equal to the male to female transmission rate. There is much to be learned about the potential spread of HIV by IV drug using prostitutes in the U.S., and this must be considered a potential source for viral spread in the future, particularly if "SAFE SEX" practices are not utilized.

CLEANING YOUR WORKS

If you share your works, clean all parts of the outfit with bleach and water before and after each person uses them. Don't take shortcuts just because your in a hurry. It may save your life. DON'T SHARE YOUR WATER OR COTTON AT ALL.

If you share a cooker, rinse it with bleach and water between each use. Works **MUST** be cleaned with both bleach and water. You can dilute the bleach and it will still work, but full strength is preferred. Draw the bleach into the syringe until it is full. For 30 seconds shake or tap the syringe while it is filled with the bleach to loosen the blood and debris. Push out the bleach and flush the syringe with clean water. Do this at least two to three times to kill the HIV virus and other germs. Then draw up clean water into the works, and squirt it out doing this two to three times, making sure that all the bleach is rinsed out. Be careful not to shoot or drink the bleach by mistake. **NEVER INJECT BLEACH DIRECTLY INTO YOUR VEINS.** This will not kill the HIV in your body, but it can make you very sick. If you can't get bleach, then use rubbing alcohol instead. Follow the same routine as you would for bleach.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. If you rinse with water and blow air through the barrel and needle it is _____ clean of all HIV?
2. Which of the following items are safe to share?
 - A. water
 - B. cotton
 - C. cooker
 - D. all of the above
 - E. none of the above
3. Shaking and tapping the syringe while it is full of bleach does what?
4. A large number of IV drug users occasionally engage in prostitution for what reason?
5. U.S. prostitutes began using safe sex practices in the mid _____ in response to the spread of _____.
6. If bleach kills HIV in your works, will it kill the HIV in your _____ blood if you shoot up bleach?
7. HIV is about 0.00000047 in length. _____ of the viruses could fit on the period at the end of this sentence.

(18) Wish, E and Johnson, B - The impact of substance abuse on the criminal careers. In the criminals careers and career criminals, A. Blumstein, J. Cohan and C. Visher (eds). Washington, D.C., National Academy Press. 1986, 2:52-58.

(19) DES Jarlais, D; Wish, E; Friedman, S; Et al. "Intravenous Drug Use and Heterosexual Transmission of HIV : Current Trends in New York. In the New York State Journal of Medicine, 1987. 87:282-285.

SHOULD I GET TESTED?

Getting tested for HIV in prison and jail is different than being tested on the outside.

There are both pro's and cons on getting tested while your on the inside.

On the plus side it is always good to know your medical status. If you are HIV positive you can begin to make changes in your lifestyle and habits so you can live longer. You can also get the proper medical treatment if you need it.

Also knowing your HIV status will enable you to contact your sexual partners on the outside and inside.

All too often your medical results become known by other prisoners or staff. Be it from you confiding in someone or someone identifying your status through your medications. Only you can decide what is best for you.

If you decide to have yourself tested it is best to take the HIV test at least 3 months after your last possible exposure to HIV ie: high risk behaviors. Almost all people develop antibodies within three (3) months, although there are cases of people who take longer.

Remember that at anytime you have been exposed to HIV, you can pass the virus onto someone else,- sex partners, IV drug buddies if you share needles, or to unborn children, or if a exposed woman is breast-feeding.

If you have been involved in High Risk behaviors, (unprotected sex, multiple partners, IV drug use) and would like to get tested, contact the medical department and tell them you want to be tested.

If you prefer to do this when you get out call the National AIDS Hotline for where to go in your community. 1-800-342-AIDS or for Spanish speaking only 1-800-344-7432.

If you feel that you may have been exposed or have engaged in any high risk activities please do yourself and your partner a favor GET TESTED.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. There _____ advantages to getting a HIV test while you are still in prison or jail.
2. The best time to get a HIV test is a least _____ after your last possible exposure.
3. What are some of the advantages of getting the HIV test.

WHAT DOES A NEGATIVE TEST RESULT MEAN?

A negative test result means that no antibodies to HIV were found in your body.

A HIV negative result within the first three (3) months after having unprotected sex or sharing points to shoot dope means either your body has not had time to develop antibodies yet or that you are not infected with HIV.

A negative test result does not mean that you will not become infected in the future or that you will not infect other people if you keep having unprotected sex or sharing works. If you have a history of risky behavior, you may want to get tested again in

three months.

It remains important to not engage in high risk behavior. This is the only way to insure yourself of not being infected.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Is the following statement correct? A negative test result means you can engage in unprotected sex or share works to shoot dope and never worry about being infected in the future.
2. If you test negative will you be able to be infected with HIV in the future?

WHAT DOES A POSITIVE TEST RESULT MEAN?

A positive test result means that you have been infected with HIV. This result is called being HIV-positive (HIV+). The test can not predict if or when a person will go on to develop symptoms of AIDS.

A HIV+ person can infect other people through sexual contact or blood to blood contact.

An HIV+ person should **NEVER** have unsafe/unprotected sex, and should **NEVER** should never share needles without cleaning them with bleach.

A HIV+ person should **NEVER** donate blood, plasma, semen, or organs.

A HIV+ woman who is thinking about having a baby should discuss her options with a health care worker or doctor because there is a 15-30 % chance the she could have a HIV+ baby. It should be noted that there is a whole lot of research in this field right now especially in Italy and Germany. For the latest studies and results, contact your health care provider, or your online service, or Internet system for more information.

A HIV+ person should seek medical care as soon as possible because early treatment can help you live longer. Some people have been HIV+ for years (10-15) and still feel fine. The writer of this program has been HIV+ for ten (10) years or more and still feels fine and you can not tell by looking at me. Studies show however, that most people will become sick over time. There is no clear reason yet why one person gets sick and another does not.

Good health habits, like getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods, not smoking, or drinking alcohol, or using drugs, exercising regularly, and having supportive friends may help keep you healthy.

In prison or jail it is a good idea to be very careful about

telling people that you are HIV+. Many people are ignorant about what HIV/AIDS really is and some believe that they can catch HIV from casual contact. **THIS IS NOT TRUE**, but such ignorance can be dangerous to you and others. For most people talking about being HIV+ is best kept with your friends and people you trust who will not turn against you or try to use your being HIV+ against you.

Other people to talk to are your counselor, psychologist, or health workers. But be sure that the people that you talk to know your desire to keep this information confidential. The right to have your medical status kept confidential between health services and yourself is a major issue for HIV+ prisoners. You do have the right to privacy. Even in prison, your HIV status should not be a topic open for discussion among other prisoners and officers.

There may be other questions about HIV/AIDS, whatever your status is. You may want to write to a local AIDS service organization for more information and brochures. Listed below are some organizations about HIV/AIDS. Write them today.

National AIDS Information Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 6003
Rockville, MD. 20850

American Foundation for AIDS Research
Prison Library/ HIV/AIDS Treatment info.
733 3rd Ave 12th floor
New York, New York 10017

Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF)
151 S. Tucson Blvd., Suite 252
Tucson, Az. 85716-5500

AIDS Education Awareness program in Prison
P.O. Box 466
Gardner, Ma. 01440

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. If you test HIV+ does that mean you have AIDS?
2. If you are HIV+ _____ pass the HIV virus on to other people through high risk activities.
3. A HIV+ person can donate only the following safely?
blood
plasma
semen
organs

none of the above

4. There re people who have been HIV+ for _____ years and still feel fine.
5. Why do some people become sick right away and others do not?
6. Good health habits like getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods _____ or _____, _____ exercising regularly and having supportive friends may help keep you healthy.
7. Why is it a good idea to be careful about telling people that you are HIV+?
8. You have the _____ to keeping your HIV+ status confidential.
9. Even in prison your HIV status should not be a topic for open discussion among other _____ and _____.
10. What are the chances that a HIV+ woman would have a HIV+ baby?

HOW CAN I STAY HEALTHY WHILE I'M IN PRISON?

It's hard to stay healthy in most prisons even if a person isn't HIV+. Your life is more stressful than on the outside. You may not like the food and not eat properly. It's hard to get enough exercise and fresh air, but if you are HIV+ you need to focus on taking care of yourself and your own health, because this could mean the difference between living longer or getting sick sooner.

Drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes can weaken your immune system and make you sick sooner. It's a good idea to stop doing drugs and drinking even if they are available in prison.

Stopping smoking cigarettes is hard because you are under stress, but this can make a huge difference in your general health.

Eating healthy can help you stay well longer. If you talk to your doctor or P.A. you may be able to get a special diet or extra vitamins or supplements. It's important to exercise and get as much fresh air as possible.

The most important thing to remember is to have a positive attitude. Talk regular with your counselor or physiologist.

WHAT SHOULD I TELL MY FAMILY?

If you find out that you are HIV positive while you are in prison, telling your family may be very difficult.

Sometimes you do not know when you will see them again. If you are far away from home or don't get visits you may want to talk to your counselor or chaplain about making a private phone call.

Some of the members of your family, like your spouse, partner, or lover may need to know that you are HIV+, because you may have passed HIV on to them.

Most children do not understand life-threatening illnesses. Children want to believe that you are not sick and that you will come home to them. If you do tell your children they may be scared about catching the virus. You will need to educate them about HIV infection.

Remember you can't give the virus to your children while you are playing with them, feeding them or parenting them in other ways. Although the virus can be passed during breast-feeding.

WHAT IF A FRIEND HAS HIV OR AIDS?

People with HIV hope for the same kind of support and friendship you have always given them before. They may feel alone, afraid and uncertain about their relationships with others or even the future. One of the main worries of prisoners who have HIV or AIDS is that they will die in prison. If you are their friend you can help by continuing to talk to them and do things together like before, sharing experiences just as you used to. Remember even if a person is HIV+ they still are human. We all need friends and people that we can confide in. Be that person! Remember as long as you are not involved in high risk behavior you will not have a opportunity to be infected. It will help for you to educate yourself about HIV so you can help stop the rumors and answer other peoples questions. With this program about HIV/AIDS you can tell other prisoners about it and encourage them to learn more about HIV/AIDS.

NOTE:

You should know that just because this institution's officials agree to pass out this booklet, it does not mean that they support your violating institutional policy or laws. If you are caught in illegal sex or drug use, you will be dealt with in the usual manner. All institutional rules must be followed at all times.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Taking care of yourself could mean the difference between _____ or _____.

2. Drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes can weaken your immune system and make you sicker sooner. It's a good idea to _____ doing drugs and drinking.
3. The most important thing to remember is_____.
4. Some of the members of your family like your_____or _____ may need to know that you are HIV+ because, you may have passed HIV on to them.
5. People with HIV hope for the same kind of support and _____ you have given them before.
6. As long as you are not involved in_____behavior you will not have an opportunity to be infected.