

# AIDS

INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLERS

With no cure or vaccine  
so far for **AIDS**,  
**PREVENTION** is vital.

For more information,  
please contact your doctor  
or the nearest Hospital/Health Centre/Clinic.



**DON'T BRING AIDS HOME**

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## 1. SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED ABOUT AIDS?

No matter where you live or travel, you need to know about AIDS. AIDS is a fact in today's world — throughout the world.

## 2. WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS is a disease caused by a virus which can break down the body's immune system and lead to death resulting from infections and/or some rare forms of cancers.

## 3. HOW IS AIDS SPREAD?

The AIDS virus spreads most frequently through sexual activity. The virus can be transmitted from any infected person to his or her sexual partner (man to man, man to woman, and from woman to man). But it is also spread by contaminated blood — in transfusions, on needles, or on any skin-piercing instruments. Also, an AIDS virus-infected mother can transmit the virus to her child before, during or shortly after birth.

## 4. HOW IS AIDS NOT SPREAD?

- AIDS is not spread by casual contact such as sitting next to someone or shaking hands or working with people.
- Nor is it spread by insects or insect bites.
- AIDS is not spread by: swimming pools - public transportation - food - cups - glasses - plates - toilets - water - air - touching - hugging - coughing - sneezing.

## 5. CAN YOU THEN PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST AIDS?

Yes. You can easily protect yourself against AIDS during your travels by knowing and heeding the following simple rules.

## 6. HOW CAN SEXUAL SPREAD OF AIDS BE PREVENTED?

Do not have sex with prostitutes (male or female) or casual acquaintances, even in countries that claim there is no AIDS problem. You cannot tell by appearances if someone is infected with the AIDS virus; he/she can look healthy. Do not be misled by "AIDS-free" certification.

## 7. WHAT IF YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE INFECTED?

- Men should always use a condom each time from start to finish, and women should make sure their partner uses one. Use of a condom does reduce the risk of infection but it is not 100%.
- Reducing the number of your sexual partners will lower the risk of exposure to the AIDS virus.

## 8. WHAT ABOUT BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS, INJECTIONS AND OTHER SKIN-PIERCING INSTRUMENTS?

- Reduce the risk of serious injury and hence the need for blood transfusions. Wear seat belt and drive carefully. Don't mix alcohol with driving, boating or other activities that could lead to injury.

- Avoid injections unless absolutely necessary. If you must have an injection make sure the needle and syringe come straight from a sterile package or have been sterilized properly. For example, a needle and syringe which have been cleaned and then boiled for 20 minutes are ready for re-use.
- Other skin piercing instruments (tattoo and acupuncture needles, earpiercing equipment and dentists' tools) must always be sterile.
- In general, you should avoid any procedure which pierce the skin unless absolutely necessary.

## 9. WHAT IF YOU ARE ALREADY INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS?

Please consult your doctor for guidance well in advance of your proposed travel.

## 10. CAN THE DISEASE BE DETECTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER A PERSON HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO THE VIRUS?

AIDS antibodies, which indicate infection, only appear in the blood a few weeks, and sometimes several months, after a person has been infected. Hence it is not possible to detect infection immediately after exposure.

## 11. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT OR SUSPECT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THE DISEASE?

See a doctor at the nearest hospital. You will be examined fully and a blood test will be taken if necessary.