



# HIV MYTHS

IT'S TIME TO #ENDHIVSTIGMA

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**Myth #1** HIV always leads to AIDS.

**THE FACTS:**

Not all HIV-positive individuals will develop AIDS. AIDS is a syndrome of immune system deficiency that is the result of HIV attacking the immune system over time.



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**Myth #2** HIV is a death sentence.

**THE FACTS:**

“With proper treatment, we now expect people with HIV to live a normal life span,” says Dr. Michael Horberg, national director of HIV/AIDS for Kaiser Permanente.



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**Myth #3** You can tell if someone has HIV/AIDS by looking at them.

**THE FACTS:**

If an individual contracts the HIV virus, the symptoms are largely unremarkable.



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**Myth #4** Straight people don't have to worry about HIV infection.

**THE FACTS:**

Heterosexuals accounted for 24% of new HIV infections in 2016, and about 2/3 of those were women.



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**Myth #5** HIV-positive people can't safely have children.

**THE FACTS:**

A woman who takes her HIV medicine daily and continues medicine for her baby for 4-6 weeks after birth can have risk of transmitting HIV to the baby as low as 1% or less.



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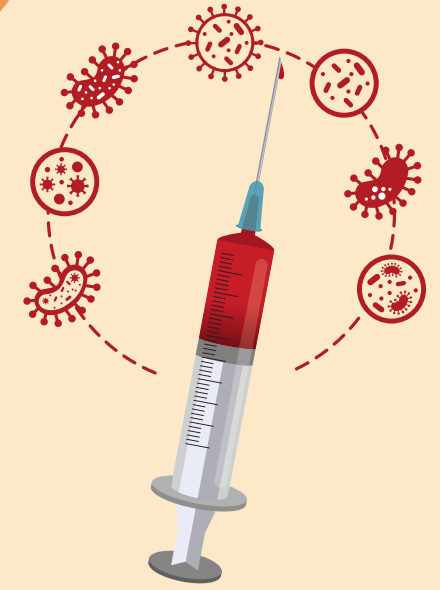
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## Myth #6 HIV/AIDS is no longer a crisis.

### THE FACTS:

You might not see HIV/AIDS on the news every day like it once was—but the crisis is far from over. In the U.S. alone, 1.2 million people are estimated to be living with HIV, the overwhelming majority of which are African-American gay men.

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## Myth #7 You can contract HIV from touching someone who is HIV-positive.

### THE FACTS:

HIV can NOT be transmitted through air, water, saliva, sweat, tears, or sharing a toilet; the virus can only be transmitted through certain body fluids like blood, semen, vaginal fluid, rectal fluid, or breast milk.

## Myth #8 There is a cure for HIV/AIDS.

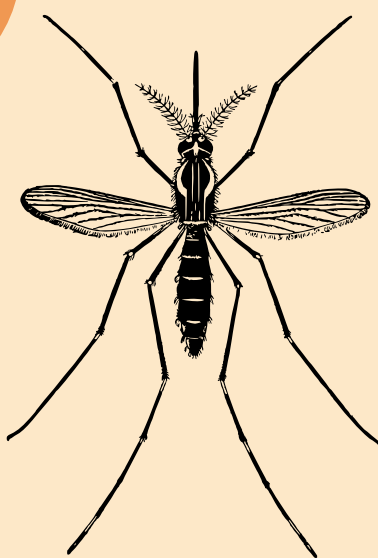
### THE FACTS:

Though there is no proven cure for HIV, current antiretroviral medications allow HIV-positive people to live healthy lives with roughly the same life expectancy as those who are HIV-free.

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## Myth #9 Mosquitoes spread HIV.

### THE FACTS:

When mosquitoes bite, they don't inject the blood of the person or animal they bit before you. Also, HIV only has a short lifespan in the mosquitoes.

## Myth #10 If I'm getting treatment, I can't spread the virus.

### THE FACTS:

If you miss doses of your HIV meds or stop using them, you can pass the virus to others. Even if you and your partner both have HIV, wearing condoms can protect you both from other, possibly drug-resistant, strains, as well as other sexually transmitted diseases.

10



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Sources: <https://www.red.org/reditorial/hiv-aids-myths-and-why-theyre-not-true>  
<https://www.webmd.com/hiv-aids/top-10-myths-misconceptions-about-hiv-aids>