

Let's Talk about HIV – in Our Language

The AIDS & Mobility Europe Guidebook



Imprint

AIDS & Mobility Europe Guidebook
Information about HIV and AIDS, Hepatitis, STIs, Safe Sex and Safe Drug Use
A Guidebook for Migrants and Mobile Populations in Europe

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Foreword

Dear Reader

It is important that people with HIV, AIDS or hepatitis can live lives free of discrimination.

We all need to know how these infections are transmitted and how to protect ourselves and our communities. It is also important to recognise our different languages and cultural backgrounds. In my many years of working with my fellow migrants, people who move around and ethnic minorities I have learnt that knowledge is better than fear, and that information presented in our own language is the key. This is why we have called this booklet "Let's Talk about HIV – in Our Language."

Learning and talking about sex, sexual health and injecting drug use, even if they are sometimes difficult topics, helps us lead safer lives.



The European Commission supports AIDS & Mobility Europe (A&M) in reaching out to young people, their families and communities. This booklet is brought to you by the AIDS & Mobility network.

It will help you learn about the most important facts: how HIV, hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections are passed on, how you can protect yourself and others, how you can find out if you are infected and what treatment is available. It aims to provide practical, up-to-date information and to guide you to specialised services if you need more personal advice and assistance.

AIDS & Mobility encourages you to know the facts, and to get tested for HIV and hepatitis. Voluntary testing is the first step to effective treatment and care. Please contact the organisations listed at the back of this guidebook for further advice. You do not have to give your real name when you first contact them.

I am proud and pleased to recommend this booklet to you and I would like to thank the partners and supporters of AIDS & Mobility for contributing to its production and dissemination.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Salman'.

Ramazan Salman
(A&M Project Leader)

Introduction

HIV-prevention is important for everyone. Even if you don't intend to have sex or use drugs: 'Knowledge is Power' and you may one day teach someone else. This guide-book provides information about HIV and AIDS, its prevention, testing, treatment, care and support. It also contains information about viral hepatitis, tuberculosis and sexually transmissible infections (STIs).

All of these illnesses are caused by infections. An infection means that a very small organism, most of the time a virus or a bacterium, enters the body and causes changes that make the person ill.

Different infectious organisms affect different parts of the body. This can be a particular organ, for example the liver in the case of hepatitis, or a particular system, like the immune system in the case of HIV.

HIV, hepatitis and STIs spread from person to person. Some human behaviours, such as sex and injecting drugs, make it easier for these viruses or bacteria to enter the body.

To protect your health:

- If you have sex, practice **safe sex**
- If you use drugs, practice **safe use**
- Get **vaccinations** against hepatitis A and B
- Have regular **sexual health checks**, including an **HIV test**
- **Get tested for TB** if you think you may have been at risk

This book explains why and how.

It has been written to assist people from many cultural and language backgrounds, especially young people and their families, to better protect themselves. It also aims to take away fear, to enable dialogue and to help in fighting stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV, AIDS or hepatitis.

The AIDS & Mobility Europe project brings together people from many languages and cultures. The content of this book reflects experiences from many countries.

It was produced for participants in AIDS & Mobility community education sessions on HIV, conducted by trained and certified transcultural HIV and AIDS mediators. It is provided to you for free. We hope you will find it useful. Please contact the organisations listed at the end for more information and support.

Your Rights

The right to health is a fundamental human right to which all people are entitled, regardless of their status or citizenship. As a result of the migration experience or because they lack access to information, prevention or health care services, migrants have specific health needs and can be at a higher risk of infectious diseases such as HIV, hepatitis, STIs and tuberculosis.



All European Union countries have signed up to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights and must ensure that health services are available, accessible and acceptable to all, and of high quality. Accessibility also means that services should be sensitive to patients with different cultural backgrounds.

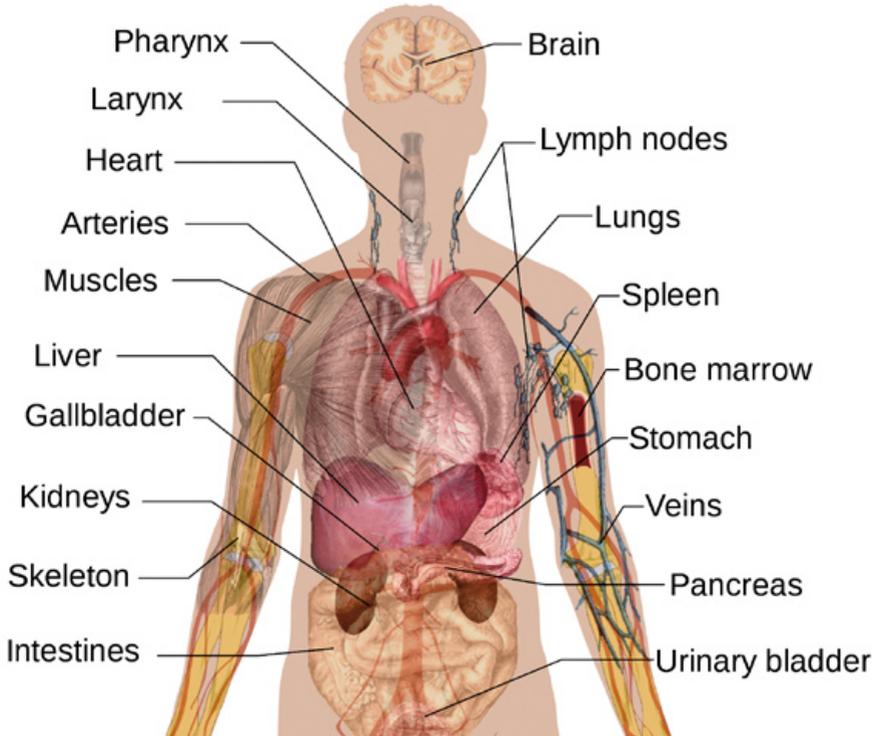
Regulations and resolutions at the level of the European Union aim to ensure that as a migrant or as a member of a mobile population or ethnic minority you have equal access to health care. Even if you are in a country without having legal status, you still have a right to health, and therefore access to medical care.

While countries are making progress towards equal health for all, migrants and mobile populations still experience significant barriers to health care: information may not be available in your language, or there may not be a competent translator available. You may be expected to pay for some services, or they may be located some distance away.

To find out more about accessing health services where you are, try contacting your nearest migrant support service. The addresses in the back of this book may also be able to assist.

The Human Body

Human anatomy



The infections explained in this booklet affect different parts of the human body. This image shows

some of the main building blocks and organs and where they are located.

About HIV and AIDS

- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) if left untreated.
- There may be no symptoms in the early stages of HIV infection. A person can be infected with HIV for many years without symptoms, but still pass on the virus.
- Current treatments for HIV infection are very successful. They can keep a person healthy for life. HIV antiretroviral treatment is taken every day and can have some side effects.
- If left untreated, the virus affects the immune system, making the body unable to fight off and recover from many infections and other illnesses.
- AIDS can be avoided with treatment. It develops when the immune system is so weak that the body becomes susceptible to many serious illnesses and infections, which can be fatal.
- There is no vaccine to protect against HIV yet.



HIV and body fluids

The virus exists in all body fluids of an infected person, but concentrations high enough for transmission are only found in:

- BLOOD, SEMEN, VAGINAL FLUID and MATERNAL MILK.

Sufficient virus has to enter the body for a person to become infected: via the bloodstream or mucous membranes (the moist, thin, sensitive type of skin inside the mouth, vagina, anus, foreskin and eye of the penis).

HIV can be transmitted:

- By having anal or vaginal sex without a condom.
- By sharing needles, syringes and other injecting equipment.
- Through unsterile tattooing and body piercing.
- Although the risk is low, by having oral sex without a condom or dental dam, especially when semen gets in the mouth and the lining of the mouth is injured.
- From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, childbirth and/or breastfeeding. This can be safely prevented through medical care.
- Through unscreened blood transfusions, blood products and organ transplants.

If you think you have been at risk, get tested for HIV.

How HIV cannot be transmitted

If you know someone who is living with HIV, it is safe to:

- Share glasses, plates, the same bed and toilet
- Have contact with sweat or tears
- Shake hands
- Touch and kiss
- Have non-penetrative sex
- Have protected oral, vaginal and anal sex using condoms and lubricant (gel).



The HIV test

- A blood test or a test on saliva can show if you have been infected with HIV. Some clinics offer 'rapid' tests that give results immediately, but most often you will have to return for your results some days later.
- When HIV enters a person's body, special proteins are produced, which are the body's response to an infection. They are called antibodies. The test looks for HIV antibodies.
- It usually takes between 3 to 12 weeks after infection for the antibodies to develop. The time between infection and the development of antibodies is called the 'window period'. In the window period, people are infected with HIV but may not yet have antibodies in their blood that can be detected by an HIV test. However, the person may already have high levels of HIV in her/his blood, semen, vaginal fluid or breast milk and can infect others.
- This means that an HIV test shows what your HIV status was 12 weeks before the test.
- Protect yourself while you are waiting for the HIV test results. The test does not protect you from infection.
- If a person has antibodies in her/his blood, it means that she/he has been infected with HIV.
- If the result is positive, a second test will normally be done to confirm the result.

A HIV antibodies NEGATIVE

test result means:

- That NO antibodies to HIV were found in the test and the person is free of HIV infection.

A HIV antibodies POSITIVE

test result means:

- That antibodies to HIV were found in the blood test. It means that infection has taken place and the person will now always test positive for HIV.

Symptoms

Some people report flu-like symptoms for a short time immediately after infection. This is called a sero-conversion illness. After that, symptoms can take years to appear, but the person can still infect others. Each individual responds differently to HIV infection, but symptoms can include persistent herpes and fungal infections, severe tiredness, night sweats, fever, extreme weight loss, persistent diarrhoea, red/purple/brown marks on the skin or the mouth. However, such symptoms can occur with a range of illnesses: only a blood test can confirm HIV infection. HIV can be treated with antiretroviral medication. It can keep the person healthy over a close to average life expectancy, but there is no cure. Only without treatment do most HIV positive people develop AIDS at some later time.

Treatment

Antiviral medications are very effective in improving the health of people living with HIV and increasing their life expectancy to almost average. Most people living with HIV who have access to treatment will never develop AIDS. While there is currently no treatment that removes HIV from your body completely, you can stay healthy and avoid developing AIDS by taking antiretroviral medication. These prevent the virus from multiplying and causing more damage to the immune system. They are taken every day and sometimes have difficult side effects. Not everyone responds well and not everyone wants to take antiviral treatment. People living with HIV need to see a specialist doctor regularly to check their immune system and to recommend the right treatment at the right time.



Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis is an emergency treatment that can help avoid HIV infection after an exposure to the virus that could result in transmission, such as having unprotected sex, a condom breaking or sharing injecting equipment. It consists of a one-month course of antiviral medication and has to be started within 72 hours of the exposure.

Before offering this treatment, the doctor will ask questions about the risk you experienced. Because the treatment can have side effects, it should only be taken if the risk was high. The way you can get PEP will be different in different places. Contact the HIV or health service nearest to you for more information.

Safe Sex



Safe sex is sexual activity that avoids the transmission of disease by not exchanging body fluids or using protective barriers such as condoms. Deciding to always have safe sex is important for everyone. If you want to become pregnant, it is best if you and your partner get tested for sexually transmitted infections including HIV before stopping condom use.

Using alcohol and other drugs can make it more difficult to stick to the decision to always have safe sex. You are more likely to have safe sex if you make the decision ahead of time, always carry condoms with you and avoid the bad effects of drugs and alcohol.

Condoms

Male and female condoms protect from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. The male condom is a thin latex (or polyurethane) tube that is put on the penis and prevents the semen from entering the vagina and uterus or anal canal. The sperm is held inside the condom. In women this also prevents eggs being fertilised, and therefore pregnancy. The female condom is a similar, but larger tube with flexible rings. It can be inserted into the vagina before sexual intercourse. The female condom can be useful for women who want to take more control over safe sex, and for men who can't use male condoms.

Male condoms come in a range of sizes, shapes, flavours and colours to suit every penis and occasion. Most important is that the condom has a quality seal (such as "CE") and an expiry date.

Depending on the country and location, condoms can be bought at local shops, supermarkets, pharmacies, from vending machines and over the internet. Youth, social and health services often also distribute condoms, sometimes for free.

If used properly, condoms are proven to effectively protect you and your partner from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

- Always use a condom for vaginal and anal sex.
- For a smaller penis you can get smaller (narrower) condoms that won't slip off as easily.
- For a larger penis you can get larger (wider) condoms that won't constrict the blood flow or break easily.
- For oral sex you can use a flavoured condom (it hides the taste of the latex), or one with no lubrication at all.

Especially for anal sex, always use a lubricant (gel) for comfort, better sensation and to reduce the risk of the condom breaking. Never use two condoms together: the rubbing makes them more likely to break.

If a condom breaks, leaks or slips off during intercourse and you think you may have been at risk of HIV infection, seek medical attention for access to PEP immediately (the treatment has to be started within 72 hours, and the earlier the better).

You can also get an emergency contraceptive if you are worried about getting pregnant.



Lubricants (Gel or Jelly)



Using water-based lubricants increases comfort and sensation. It also helps stop condoms breaking, especially if the vagina or anus is dry. Because the rectum does not produce its own lubricant, always use lots for anal sex.

Some lubricants contain spermicides to prevent pregnancy. However, research has shown that using Nonoxynol can increase your risk of HIV infection – so don't use any products containing Nonoxynol.

Contact the services listed at back of the booklet to tell you where you can obtain condoms and lubricants, and how to access PEP and emergency contraception in your country.

Condom Tips

When buying condoms

- Always buy condoms with a quality seal ('CE').
- Only condoms made of latex or polyurethane are suitable for safe sex.
- Check that the package is not damaged.
- Check the expiry date. If the condom is out of date, it is more likely to break.

When using condoms, do

- use condoms with a quality seal, and use them before the expiry date;
- keep fresh condoms in a place where they will not get damaged by heat;
- use a new condom every time you have sex;
- only use water-based lubricant (gel or jelly) with condoms;
- open the packet carefully with your fingers: watch out for sharp or broken fingernails.

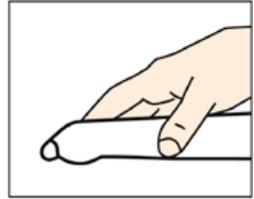
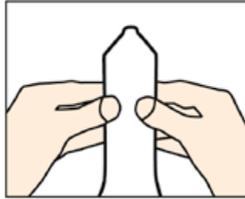
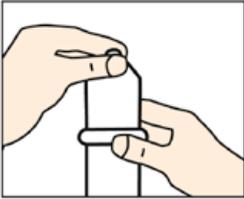
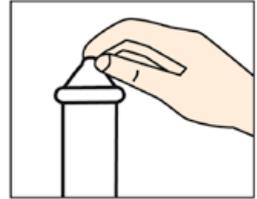
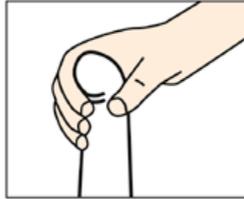
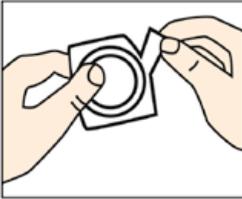
When using condoms, don't

- use baby oil, Vaseline or other oil-based lubricants with condoms made of latex – they cause latex condoms to become porous and break;
- open the packet with your teeth or scissors because you could accidentally damage the condom;
- unroll the condom before putting it on because air could get trapped in the tip.

Using condoms

When to put it on

- The penis must be hard before you put the condom on.
- Put the condom on before starting intercourse.



During sex

- Check now and then that it is still on. You can hold the rim of the condom at the base of the penis during sex to stop it slipping off and/or your partner from interfering with it.

Putting the condom on

- Pinch the teat or top of the condom between your thumb and forefinger, making sure you get all the air out.
- Put the condom on the head of the penis and roll it down the shaft of the penis while holding the tip.
- Make sure you roll the condom all the way down to the base of the penis.

After ejaculation

- Withdraw the penis before it becomes soft.
- Hold on to the rim of the condom when withdrawing the penis to prevent it slipping off and being left in the vagina or anus.
- After the penis is withdrawn, remove the condom and dispose of it in a waste bin (don't flush condoms down the toilet – they clog up pipes and water treatment plants).
- Clean up after yourself, especially in public places.

Safe Drug Use

It is safest not to use drugs. If you do, there are ways to reduce the risks.

If you or your friends are using drugs, being well informed about safe drug use is very important.

Almost all countries in the European Union offer support for people who use drugs without being judgmental or insisting on abstinence. They often contact people who use drugs in the streets to provide clean needles, syringes and other equipment. They may also help you find shelter and medical care, including the option to start using opiate substitution treatment. In some countries there are also drug consumption rooms to make injecting drugs safer. The main goal of such services is to reduce the harm and health problems related to using drugs.

If you use drugs, consider looking for services like this in your neighbourhood and contact them for information and support.

Drug use has different risks related to:

- the type of drug you use,
- the way you use drugs,
- the environment in which you use drugs.

Using drugs can change the way you make decisions, including decisions about safe sex. Some drugs, such as amphetamines, can increase the desire to have sex. However, they also affect men's ability to get or maintain an erection, which can make it more difficult to use condoms.

In this booklet we will mostly look at how to reduce the risks related to the way you use drugs.

The most risky way of using drugs is injecting.

Safe Injecting

1. Make sure your equipment is clean

- Use sterile needles and syringes only.
- Use your own clean spoon, filter and water (bottled water or water that has been boiled for at least 5 minutes).
- Do not share any of the equipment.

2. Before the injection

- Wash your hands.
- Choose an injection site.
- Rotate the injection sites: using one vein over and over can cause it to collapse.
- Clean the injection site with an alcohol swab, or at least with soap and water.

3. Injecting

- Find a comfortable position. It is less risky to inject in the company of your friends than alone (especially in the case of overdose).
- Use a tourniquet to tie off the vein. This can greatly ease access to your veins and reduce the amount of damage the needle causes.
- Clean the injecting site with an alcohol swab.

- For minimal tissue damage, hold the syringe at a 45-degree angle, with the needle's bevel (sharpened side) up. Always inject in the direction of the blood flow – towards your heart.
- Draw the plunger back a little to check if blood flows into syringe. This way you know the needle is in the vein.
- Untie the tourniquet.
- Inject slowly.

4. After injecting

- After taking the needle out of the vein, take a dry swab/clean paper tissue (not a finger, because dirty fingers or used cloths can easily pass on germs) and with it put pressure on the injection site. This helps prevent bruises.
- Afterwards, do not wipe the injection site with an alcohol swab (it stops the blood from clotting and prolonged bleeding leads to more bruising, more infections, and slower healing) and do not lick it (saliva can cause serious infection).
- When the bleeding has stopped, it can be helpful to use 'Vein Cream.' (Aloe Vera, Vitamin E, or similar) for reducing swelling and promoting healing.
- And do not forget: rotate the sites and from time to time to give your veins a break or smoke, snort or eat your drugs instead of injecting.

Overdose prevention

- Be sure about exactly what drug you are injecting.
- Be sure about the strength of your drug supply. Test your dope. If you have been clean for a while (even two weeks counts), or are using a new dealer, do a small shot first.
- Never inject alone, or in a place where you cannot be found.
- Know what to do when someone overdoses.

Signs of an overdose

- lips or nails turning blue
- sudden unresponsiveness
- the person is breathing very slowly or not at all

What to do in case of an (opioid) overdose?

In most cases, first aid is not enough. Calling emergency medical care immediately is very important. The emergency team can often stop the overdose by giving a medical antidote.

Person is conscious

- talk to the person
- keep the person awake

Person is unconscious, but breathing

Try to wake the person by

- slapping his/her face
- squeezing the muscle above the collarbone
- pressing your thumb nail on a finger nail
- throwing cold water into his/her face

Person remains unconscious, person is not breathing

- call emergency telephone number
- stay with the unconscious person
- apply first aid (if you are trained)

First aid and rescue measures for unconscious people can be learnt by almost everybody. Please refer to the addresses in the back of this guidebook to learn more about courses and training in first aid.

Sniffing, Swallowing, smoking or inhaling

Sniffing, swallowing, smoking or inhaling drugs are safer than injecting, though still not without risks. Once you have sniffed, swallowed, smoked or inhaled a drug, the effects can be delayed for one to two hours and may be stronger than you expected.

A scale of risk, starting with the safest way, would look like this:

1. No drug use
2. Swallowing
3. Smoking
4. Inhaling
5. Sniffing
6. Injecting

Injecting is riskiest because there is a greater chance of:

- Overdose
- Infections like HIV, Hepatitis B and C and others through sharing injecting equipment
- Abscesses and vein damage
- Blood clots (thromboses), blood poisoning (septicaemia) and gangrene

Sniffing is riskier than swallowing or smoking because

- It is easier to overdose (than via swallowing or smoking).
- There is a risk of catching Hepatitis B and C and HIV by sharing sniffing equipment because the delicate lining of the nose can bleed easily.

Tips for safer sniffing

- Always crush crystals/powder as finely as possible using two clean spoons. This can produce a fine powder and allows for relatively good control of your dose.
- Do not share straws or tubes for sniffing: Small amounts of blood can be passed between people using the same tube or straw, transmitting infections such as HIV or hepatitis.
- Bank notes are not advisable as they are likely to carry germs.

About Viral Hepatitis

Hepatitis means 'inflammation of the liver'. A number of viruses (called A, B, C, D and E) can cause hepatitis. Knowing about hepatitis C, B and A is important to protect your health. Depending on the type of hepatitis, the illness can be 'acute' or 'chronic'. An acute illness is when you get better quickly, usually within weeks or months. A chronic illness lasts a long time, possibly the rest of your life. Symptoms may come and go, and some are serious or even fatal.



Hepatitis C

Transmission

The Hepatitis C virus is much more infectious than HIV, and is transmitted through blood contact, particularly sharing injecting equipment. Even small, invisible amounts of blood are enough to cause infection.

It can also be transmitted during tattooing and body piercing (if equipment is not sterilised properly), through un-screened transfusions and from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth.

Transmission through sexual contact is rare, but possible when blood is present.

About $\frac{3}{4}$ of people exposed get chronic hepatitis C, the rest clear the virus naturally.

- There is no vaccine against Hepatitis C.

Prevention

- Don't share any injecting equipment, including swabs, filters and tourniquets.
- If you are getting tattoos or body piercing, always make sure the equipment is single use only or has been properly sterilised.
- When dealing with blood spills, always use protective gloves and clean up with bleach.

Testing

- An antibody test on a sample of blood can show if you have ever been exposed to the hepatitis C virus.
- If positive (meaning you have been exposed at some point in the past), a second blood test, called a PCR test, must be performed to determine if you have cleared the virus or have chronic hepatitis C infection.
- Only if you have chronic hepatitis C will you need regular checks and possibly treatment.

Everyone who has ever injected drugs or had a tattoo, or a blood transfusion before the blood supply in their country was controlled (mostly before the 1990s), should get tested for hepatitis C.

Symptoms

As there are often no obvious symptoms of chronic hepatitis C for many years, many people are unaware they have the virus. Symptoms, when present, can be vague, or they may come and go. Some people experience unusual tiredness and feel 'unwell'.

Many will only have mild inflammation of the liver, which may never develop further. In some cases however, the inflammation damages the liver and leads to cirrhosis or cancer some 20 or even 30 years after being infected.

Treatment

Currently, Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection can be treated with antiviral treatments, which can cure the infection in 50–80% of cases, depending on the type of virus. Treatment is not recommended for everyone. Some people only need regular checks to detect if damage to their liver is occurring or progressing. Currently available treatment lasts for 6–12 months and can have difficult side effects, but curing the infection can prevent further damage to the liver.

Hepatitis B

Transmission

Hepatitis B is also much more infectious than HIV, and is transmitted through contact with body fluids (e.g. blood, semen, vaginal fluids and saliva). Contact with faeces may also cause infection. Most hepatitis B infections in Europe occur during sexual contact, particularly anal sex, and sharing contaminated injecting equipment. Sharing toothbrushes, tattooing and body piercing if equipment is not sterilised properly, or unscreened blood products can also transmit it. In developing countries, transmission from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth is still common. A few generations ago, hepatitis B was also common in parts of Europe, particularly in the South.

- A vaccine is available to prevent Hepatitis B.
- Everyone should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B. Many countries have vaccination programs for newborn babies and children.
- Ask your doctor or public health service to be tested and vaccinated.

Prevention

- Get vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
- Do not share any injecting equipment.
- Practice safe sex: use condoms for anal and vaginal sex.

- If you are getting tattoos or body piercing, always make sure the equipment is single use only or has been properly sterilised.

Testing

Different blood tests show if you have been exposed to hepatitis B, and whether you have chronic hepatitis B or have developed immunity through vaccination or exposure.

Symptoms and Treatment

Symptoms appear between one to six months after infection. The general symptoms – similar to flu – are tiredness, aches and pains, fever and/or loss of appetite. In rare cases they can be severe.

Hepatitis B can cause an acute or a chronic illness. Most adults with acute Hepatitis B do not need treatment, as they do not develop long-term liver damage. They may feel more tired than usual and need plenty of rest, but they eventually recover.

People with chronic Hepatitis B may benefit from treatment. They need to see a specialist regularly (at least every six months) to check whether their liver is damaged, and whether treatment is necessary.

Treatment aims to prevent the virus from growing and causing more liver damage.

Some drugs against HIV are also active against hepatitis B virus.

Hepatitis A

Transmission

The Hepatitis A virus is transmitted through contaminated water and food, or contact with faeces through poor hygiene or sexual contact. Hepatitis A is more common in hot countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Southern and Eastern Europe.

- A vaccine is available to prevent Hepatitis A.

Prevention

Get vaccinated against Hepatitis A: Ask your doctor or public health service to be tested and vaccinated.

Good personal and food hygiene and washing your hands regularly reduce the risk of infection. Avoid contact with faeces and use condoms for anal sex. Before travelling, or if you are unsure about health risks at your destination, contact your department of foreign affairs or travel clinic for advice on staying healthy.

Testing

A blood test is used to check if you have been exposed to hepatitis A and whether you are immunised.

Symptoms and Treatment

Symptoms appear between 2–6 weeks after infection. The general symptoms are similar to those of hepatitis B. Some people only get a mild illness. They may not know they are infected, but they can pass the virus on to others. A few people develop a serious illness and need to be looked after in hospital. There may also be nausea (feeling sick), vomiting, stomachache and/or diarrhoea. These symptoms may last for a week or more. Then jaundice may develop. It is easily noticeable because the whites of the eyes go yellow, and in more serious cases the skin goes yellow, urine may turn dark and bowel motions become pale. If jaundice appears, see a doctor immediately. As with most illnesses caused by viruses, there is no specific treatment. However, medication can alleviate the symptoms. Many people feel tired, need more rest than usual and should eat and drink as well as they are able. Alcohol must be avoided.

About Tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) is contagious and airborne. It predominantly affects young adults in their most productive years. The disease is associated with poverty: the vast majority of TB cases occur in the developing world. TB is a leading cause of HIV-related deaths worldwide. In some countries with higher numbers of people living with HIV, up to 80 % of people with TB test positive for HIV.

Cause: A bacterium called mycobacterium tuberculosis causes TB. It can affect any part of the body, but most commonly attacks the lungs.

A person can have active or inactive tuberculosis. Active TB means that the bacteria are active in the body and the immune system is unable to stop them from causing illness. People with active tuberculosis in their lungs can pass the bacteria on to anyone they come in close contact with. People can also be infected with tuberculosis that is not active in the body. Inactive tuberculosis infection is also called latent tuberculosis. People who have latent TB do not feel sick, do not have symptoms and cannot spread the disease. People who are co-infected with both HIV and latent TB have an up to 800 times greater risk of developing active TB and becoming infectious compared to people not infected with HIV.



Symptoms: the symptoms depend on where in the body the TB bacteria are growing. TB often grows in the lungs causing a bad cough that lasts longer than two weeks, pain in the chest and coughing up of blood or sputum. Other symptoms include weakness or fatigue, weight loss, lack of appetite, chills, fever and night sweats. Infection of organs other than the lungs causes a wide range of symptoms.

Test and Treatment: Antibiotics are used to kill the bacteria. Because the bacteria have become resistant to some antibiotics, effective TB treatment can be difficult and may take some time (about 6 to 24 months).

Prevention: To stop the spread of TB, it is most important to identify people with TB and their contacts, treating them and vaccinating the children. There is no vaccine available that provides reliable protection for adults. If you think you may have come into contact with TB, see your doctor or health service to be tested.

About Sexually Transmitted Infections

STIs are infections that are transmitted mainly through sexual contact. They can cause inflammation, skin problems and sometimes also serious illness.

STIs can make HIV transmission more likely because they can damage the skin and mucous membranes, attract more immune system cells for HIV to infect, and increase an HIV positive person's viral load.

They often have no obvious symptoms, but if left untreated, some STIs can cause long-term problems such as infertility. Many can be easily cured with antibiotics.

Safe sex (using condoms) can protect you against most sexually transmitted infections, but not all: If you are sexually active, have regular sexual health checks at your doctor or at a public clinic (where you can be anonymous).

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is the most common STI and affects mostly younger people. While it often has no symptoms, it can lead to infertility if untreated.

Cause: Bacteria

Symptoms

Many men and women get no symptoms at all.

Some women get one or more of the following:

- Increased or unusual vaginal discharge
- Pain when urinating
- Unusual bleeding after sex
- Pain during intercourse
- Pain in the abdomen

Some men get:

- Pain when urinating

Test and Treatment

Chlamydia infection is easy to diagnose through a urine sample or swab and can be easily cured with a course of antibiotics. Always complete the course of treatment prescribed.

Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea is also a very common STI. It too can lead to infertility if untreated.

Cause: Bacteria

Symptoms

- Many men have discharge from the urethra and pain or burning sensation when urinating.
- Many women have no symptoms at all. Some women have one or more of the following:
 - increased and/or unusual yellow or green vaginal discharge
 - pain when urinating
 - pain in the abdomen

Test and Treatment

Gonorrhoea infection is easy to diagnose through a urine test, swab or smear and can be cured with a course of antibiotics.

Genital Herpes

Genital herpes is a common infection and can't be cured. It is similar to the cold sores that appear around the lips.

Cause: Virus

Symptoms

- Small painful or itchy blisters around or in the vagina, penis, anus or mouth
- Burning sensation when urinating
- Itchy, swollen and sometimes painful lymph glands

The symptoms will disappear after two or three weeks, but can reappear later.

Test and Treatment

Herpes infection is easy to diagnose through a swab or a tissue culture at a medical check up when the blisters are present. There is no cure for Herpes at present, but doctors can prescribe treatment to alleviate the symptoms during a Herpes outbreak.

Syphilis

Syphilis was a common STI before antibiotics were available to cure it. It has recently increased again among men who have sex with men. If untreated it can have serious health consequences and even be fatal. Syphilis can also be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy and lead to abortion and birth defects.

Cause: Bacteria

Symptoms

First stage (two to twelve weeks after infection)

- One or more hard and painless sores up to 1 cm wide appear on the penis, in the vagina, mouth or anus. Sometimes it is difficult to see the sores because they are inside the vagina or anus.
- Swollen lymph glands in the neck or groin.

Second stage (from twelve weeks after infection)

- Rash all over the body, but especially on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet
- Flu-like symptoms; headache, sore throat, tiredness, fever
- Loss of hair, bald patches appearing on the head

These symptoms may come and go over many years.

Third stage (a number of years after infection)

- If left untreated, this stage occurs in about 30% of cases.
- Affected can be the heart and blood vessels and also the spinal cord and brain, causing severe complications, disabilities and even death.

Test and Treatment

Syphilis infection is diagnosed through a blood test at a medical check up. It can take up to three months for the infection to show in the test. Results are available about a week after the test, and Syphilis can be easily treated with antibiotic injections. But you will need to go back for further medical check ups to ensure the infection has been fully cured. Always complete the course of treatment and go back for the final medical check up.

Genital Warts

Cause: Virus

Symptoms

Symptoms appear a few weeks or up to eight months after infection:

- Warts around or in the vagina, penis and anus: they are painless, but can be itchy. Warts inside the vagina and cervix or the anal canal are also mostly asymptomatic. Genital warts can also occur on the face or in the mouth and throat of men and women.

Some strains of human papilloma virus (HPV) are associated with the development of cancer of the cervix and anus.

Test and Treatment

Genital Warts are easy to diagnose when visible during a medical check up or through a pap smear. Doctors can remove them by painting a solution on them that makes them shrink and disappear, or by freezing, cauterising or surgery. It is important to get treatment early, as the warts can spread: the longer you wait, the more warts there are, and the treatment will take longer. The warts may recur and you should regularly check to see if they have reappeared.

Prevention

Check with your doctor about getting vaccinated against human papilloma virus infection. This reduces the risk of

cancer developing from genital warts. Countries have different vaccination schemes for HPV. Ask your doctor or health service for more information.

Condoms can lower the risk of infection during sexual contact.

Trichomoniasis

Cause: Parasite (a one-celled organism) that infects the vagina, penis and bladder.

Symptoms

- Women get an itchy and sore vagina and unusual discharge which may be yellow/green, frothy and smelly
- Men often have no symptoms, but may get inflammation of the foreskin and discharge from the penis
- Men and women may experience pain when urinating
- Sometimes there are no symptoms.

Test and Treatment

Trichomoniasis infection is easy to diagnose through a swab at a medical check up and can be easily cured with a single course of antibiotic treatment. It is important that you follow the doctor's directions properly. You must not drink any alcohol on the day of treatment.

Contraception and Pregnancy



If you have not used any contraceptive or a condom breaks and you do not want to get pregnant, then act as quickly as possible. You can get emergency contraception up to 72 hours after sexual contact that will reduce the risk of becoming pregnant. You can get emergency contraception from a family planning or health service.

Unwanted pregnancies

If your period is late, then get a pregnancy test – you can buy a self-test kit from a pharmacy or go to your doctor or a family planning service. It is important to find out as soon as possible if you do not want to have a baby. Abortion can be arranged in most countries, but it is not usually carried out after 12 weeks.

If you are pregnant and want to arrange an abortion, ask the organisations in the back of this guidebook about your rights.

Wanted pregnancies

Keep yourself and your baby safe.

If you are pregnant and want to have the baby, check with the organisation in the back of this guidebook to find out about your rights to health care during the pregnancy and childbirth, and about your and your baby's rights once the baby is born.

It's up to you!

Choosing a reliable contraceptive is important when you want to avoid pregnancy or postpone it. But always use a condom to protect yourself from HIV and from other sexually transmitted infections.

Always discuss your contraceptive options with a doctor or family planning service.

Keep Yourself Safe

Always use a condom!

- Using condoms and water-based lubricant protects you from HIV, hepatitis B and C and other sexually transmitted infections, and prevents pregnancy.

Always use a new needle and syringe!

- Using a new sterile needle and syringe every time and not sharing any equipment protects you from HIV and hepatitis B and C.

Look after your body!

- Get tested for HIV, hepatitis B and C. Get vaccinated for hepatitis B.
- Go for regular sexual health check ups, even if you don't have symptoms.
- Always complete any course of treatment prescribed by a doctor.
- Seek PEP if you have had unsafe sex, have shared a needle or syringe or had a condom break.



We hope that reading this booklet has been helpful to you. Knowing about safe sex and safe drug use can save lives. Now that you know the facts and how to protect yourself and your community, you can also inform others:

Let's keep talking about HIV – in our language.

Further Information

The Internet offers a lot of information on many topics, including HIV and AIDS, hepatitis, STIs, TB, safe drug use, safe sex and sexuality. You can gain a lot of useful additional knowledge this way.

But information found on the Internet, in a book or anywhere else cannot replace person-to-person medical advice. Only a medical professional can give you medical advice after consulting with you and gaining knowledge about you as an individual.

It is not always easy to tell the quality and accuracy of information found on the Internet. Some is not based on scientific evidence and may be incorrect or misleading.

The following tips are based on the HONcode, a code of ethics and quality for health and medical information on the Internet:

- Websites provided by public health services or publicly funded and recognised institutions (public hospitals, universities, non-government organisations...) usually contain practical and reliable information.
- Look for information providers who are likely to have your interest at heart, and consider how any commercial interests, ideology, politics, religious or cultural beliefs may influence them.
- Ask your health service provider or local HIV and AIDS organisation for a list of reliable and relevant websites to visit.
- If in doubt, use more than one website for a balanced view and to check information.
- Check the source of the information provided: who has written the health information? Is that person qualified to give this information? If not, does he/she state the source of the information?
- Look for the evidence supporting claims made on websites.

- Check the privacy policy of a website to know what information about you is collected and what they do with it.
- Many reliable websites have a seal of certification from a trusted accrediting organisation like the Health On the Net Foundation. This certification means that the site is open about authority, authorship, confidentiality and funding, is up-to date, honest about advertising and distinguishes clearly between advertising and editorial content. Always click on the certification icon to make sure the certification is still valid.
- You can confirm the status of certification of a website using the HONcode Toolbar, which you can download at: <http://www.hon.ch/HONcode/Plugin/Plugins.html>
- If you are in any doubt, contact a health professional.

Europe-wide:

HIV Clearinghouse

Internet: www.aidsactioneurope.org
 Correlation II Network
 Stadhouderskade 159
 1074BC Amsterdam
 The Netherlands
 Tel.: +31 20 6721192
 Fax.: +31 20 6719694
 Internet: www.correlation-net.org

TAMPEP International Foundation

Obiplein 4
 1094 RB Amsterdam
 Tel: +31 20 6926912
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In your country:

Notes

On the publisher

Ramazan Salman is a social scientist and health expert born in Istanbul in 1960. He first came to Germany in 1966 as the son of migrant labourers. His goal has always been to work for the health of migrants and he founded and still leads the Ethno-Medical Centre in Hanover, where he developed the transcultural mediator model used in the AIDS & Mobility project.

He is a member of the Integration Commission of the State Parliament of Lower Saxony, was a delegate to the German Federal Integration Summit, the Committee of Experts on Mobility, Migration and Access to Health Care of the European Council, the World Economic Forum and the European Scientific and Technical Network on Health, Migration and People Living in Poverty (ENHMP).

Ramazan Salman has received many awards and public honours, including being named “Social Entrepreneur of the Year” by the Schwab Foundation in 2008 and awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit in 2009.

In addition, he works as a lecturer at universities in Hanover, St. Gallen, Zurich, Rennes, Pécs and Heidelberg. He has authored seven books on integration, migration policy and health promotion for migrants.



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