

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)

Since I last saw you, a health professional has told me that I have HIV. It is a sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection. You might have this infection too.

You could have this infection even if you don't have symptoms. It's important that you see a doctor or a nurse quickly to get tested and evaluated. There's no cure for HIV, but with treatment, people who have the infection can live as long as other people and have a good quality of life.

Over time, if HIV isn't treated, it can cause serious diseases such as cancers or evolve into AIDS.

Until you see a doctor and get tested,

- › avoid having sex. If you can't wait, use a condom for vaginal and anal sex. Use a condom or a piece of latex when you have oral sex;
- › don't share your drug injection or inhalation equipment.

That way, you'll avoid spreading the infection.

To find out where to get a screening test, call

- › **Info-Santé at 8-1-1.**

For more information:

- › sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/ (for the general public)
- › itss.gouv.qc.ca/accueil_en.dhtml (for youth)
- › cocqsida.com, website of the group COCQ-SIDA, which you can reach by telephone at 514-844-2477 or 1-866-535-0481 (toll free)
- › pvsq.org, the Portail VIH/sida du Québec. Their phone numbers are 514-523-4636 and 1-877-767-8245 (toll free) and their email address info@pvsq.org
- › catie.ca, Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange website. Their phone number is 1-800-263-1638 (toll free)

It's important for me to share this news with you because I care about your health.

Information about HIV

PREVENTION	MODES OF TRANSMISSION	SYMPTOMS	SCREENING	TREATMENT
<p>Condoms provide the best protection against sexually transmitted infections.</p> <p>Using a condom when sharing sex toys reduces the risk of transmission (use a new condom for each partner).</p> <p>A piece of latex (cut out of a non-lubricated latex condom or glove) decreases the risk of transmission during oral sex (contact between the mouth and the vulva or anus).</p> <p>→ Avoid having sex until you see your doctor and get tested, or always use a condom when you have vaginal or anal sex. Use a condom or a piece of latex when you have oral sex.</p> <p>→ If you use drugs, don't share your injection or inhalation equipment.</p>	<p>Sexual transmission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Contact between the penis and the vulva, vagina or anus, with or without ejaculation > Sharing sex toys > Contact between the mouth and the penis, vulva, vagina or anus (rare) <p>Transmission from an infected mother to her infant during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding</p> <p>Blood-borne transmission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Sharing drug injection or inhalation equipment > Using contaminated tattooing or piercing equipment > Accidental needlestick injury or cut with a contaminated sharp object (e.g. razor blade) > Other accidental exposure to contaminated body fluids (e.g. blood, sperm, vaginal secretions) 	<p>Some people have no symptoms. Others may not be aware that their symptoms are associated with HIV.</p> <p>Symptoms can include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > symptoms similar to those of the flu (fever, headache, sore throat, muscle and joint pain), > swollen glands, > sores in the mouth, > fatigue, > nausea, diarrhoea and vomiting, > noticeable weight loss. <p>→ You can have and spread HIV even if you don't have symptoms.</p>	<p>Blood test</p> <p>→ Because you've been in contact with someone who has HIV, you must see a doctor or a nurse quickly to get an HIV screening test.</p>	<p>→ There is no treatment to cure this infection. Prescription drugs (antiretrovirals) and adequate medical care can control the virus and limit the severity of the infection.</p> <p>→ People living with HIV who have good medical follow-up have the same quality of life and life expectancy as other people. Treatment is covered by Québec's Public Prescription Drug Insurance Plan or by private insurance companies.</p>