



TRANSMISSION AND EARLY INTERVENTION OVERVIEW¹

The relative efficiency with which sexual contact can transmit HIV exists along a continuum:



--receptive anal intercourse----genital intercourse-----oral sex ----hugging and dry kisses --

- receptive anal intercourse carries the highest risk; it is slightly easier to pass the virus from a man to a woman than it is from a woman to a man;
- oral sex appears to be less risky than genital intercourse, but there are documented cases in which oral sexual activity appears to be the only known means of HIV exposure.
- any sexually transmitted disease that causes ulcers or inflammation can increase the risk of becoming infected because access to the bloodstream becomes easier during sex;
- hugging and dry kissing constitute no risk of HIV exposure

OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

Alcohol and other Drugs

- use of drugs or alcohol may also increase the risk of HIV during sexual encounters due to the lowering of inhibitions and decision making abilities.
- during intravenous drug use, a quantity of blood is drawn into the needle; if immediately used by another party, a microscopic transfusion of residual blood may occur.
- sharing a “cooker” in which dry materials (such as heroin powder) is brought in solution for injection may also be a means of transmission.

Personal Relationships

- there is no risk of HIV transmission from shaking hands, using public toilets, coughing, sneezing, or being bitten by any type of insect.
- there are no cases of transmission traced to non-sexual contact: dry kissing on the cheeks and lips; sleeping together; sharing linens, toothbrushes, and razors; sharing kitchens and bathrooms; and sharing food cooking and serving facilities and utensils.

BARRIER PROTECTION

Male and Female Condoms

- Intact latex condoms provide a physical barrier, which the virus is unable to cross.
- Common reasons for condom failure include: not using early enough, not leaving a reservoir in the tip of the condom, not withdrawing from one's partner before the penis becomes flaccid, and using petroleum-based products.

DENTAL DAMS

- squares of latex that fit over a women's vulva, for use during oral sexual contact
- "homemade" can include: surgical gloves cut in half lengthwise; condoms cut lengthwise

FINGER COTS

- surgical gloves, worn in full or with finger sections only, for use when penetrating the anus or vagina