

What is World AIDS Day?

World AIDS Day is a global initiative to raise awareness, fight prejudice, and improve education about HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. World AIDS Day is December 1. About 37 million people worldwide are living with HIV. In the United States, 37,600 people are infected with HIV every year.

What is HIV/AIDS?

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. It is the virus that can lead to AIDS, or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, if not treated. Unlike other viruses, the human body can't get rid of HIV completely, even with treatment. Over time, HIV can destroy the cells in the body that would normally fight off infections and disease. These infections take advantage of a weakened immune system and signal that the person has AIDS, the last stage of HIV infection.

What are the symptoms of HIV/AIDS?

Within two to four weeks after being infected, many people experience severe flu-like symptoms. This is called acute retroviral syndrome (ARS), or "primary HIV infection."

Symptoms can include:

- Fever (most common)
- Swollen glands
- Sore throat
- Rash
- Fatigue
- Muscle and joint aches and pains
- Headache

Is there a cure?

No effective cure currently exists for HIV. But with proper medical care, HIV can be managed. Treatment for HIV is called antiretroviral therapy (ART). If antiretroviral drugs are taken correctly, ART can prolong the lives of people infected with HIV, keep them healthy, and greatly lower their chances of infecting others. Today, someone diagnosed with HIV early and treated properly can live nearly as long as someone who does not have HIV.

Mobile apps

- [AIDSinfo](#)
- [Care4Today](#)
- [GoodRx](#)
- [The Body.com](#)

Tips from our docs

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Martin Hickey, MD**, our Chief Executive Officer.

HIV and AIDS remain a persistent problem in the United States and countries around the world. While great progress has been made in preventing and treating HIV, there is still much to do. There are more tools than ever available to prevent HIV. Below are some ways to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS:

- Abstain (don't have intercourse).
- Limit the number of sexual partners.
- Never share needles.
- Use condoms correctly.

If you are living with HIV, you *can* prevent passing it to others. The most important way to do that is by taking prescribed medicines to treat HIV the right way, every day. They can keep you healthy for many years and greatly reduce your chance of transmitting HIV to your partner(s).

Additional resources

- [HIV.gov](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: HIV/AIDS Awareness](#)
- [New Mexico AIDS Services](#)