

HIV and pregnancy

HIV can be transmitted from an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, during childbirth, or through breastfeeding.

If an HIV infection is detected and treated early in the expectant mother, the risk of infection for the child decreases. For this reason, all pregnant women are offered an HIV test. The cost of this test is covered by the statutory health insurance companies.

Is treatment available?

In the event of risk contact, at the doctor's discretion, a PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) can be initiated within 24 to max. 48 hours of exposure.

In the case of an existing infection, there are various therapeutic approaches that suppress the proliferation of the virus in the body. These drugs must be taken regularly for life. There may be side effects and if taken incorrectly, resistance may develop. Therefore, treatment is provided by specially qualified doctors.

A cure is not possible because HIV integrates its genetic information into the human genome. The primary goal of therapy is to inhibit viral replication and maintain immune function. Therefore, laboratory tests are performed at regular intervals to measure viral load in the blood using PCR and to check immune status.



For statutory health insurance holders:

Some medical services cannot be covered by health insurance companies or cannot be covered in every case (e.g. at the patient's own request) and must therefore be paid by the patient.

If referred by a doctor and there is a medical indication (e.g. risk contact), this is then classified as an EBM \[physicians' fee schedule] service.

Please refer to the order form for individual healthcare services for the current prices.

For private health insurance holders:

Private health insurance will cover the costs according to the valid GOÄ \[Medical Fee Schedule for care outside the Statutory Health Insurance Scheme] if there has been no previous exclusion of benefits.

If you have any questions about this, your doctor will be happy to advise you.



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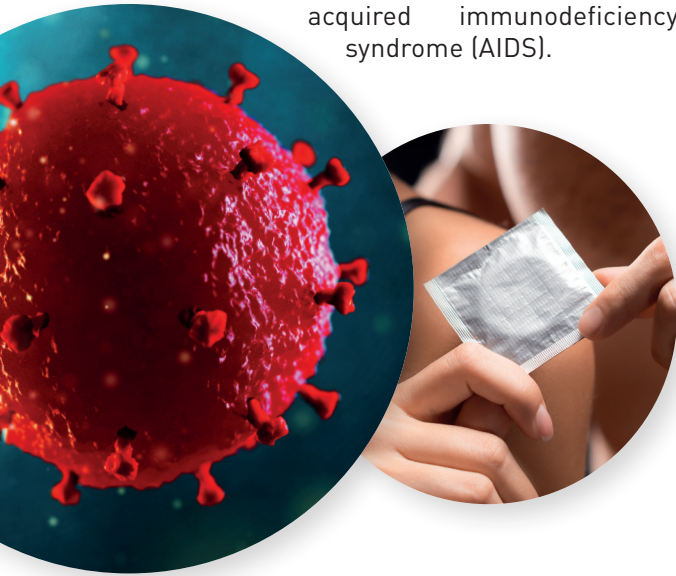
HIV test

To be on the safe side



What is HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immune Deficiency Virus and is divided into two types (HIV-1 and HIV-2). The virus causes a chronic disease associated with the destruction of immune cells if left untreated. Over a period of many years, the immune system is continually weakened and the body becomes increasingly vulnerable to infectious diseases. The end stage of this process is called acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).



How does HIV spread?

HIV-1/2 can be transmitted through unprotected sex, intravenous drug use, or in pregnancy from mother to child. However, there is no risk from everyday contact, such as shaking hands or sharing toilets, towels or bedding, etc.

What are the symptoms?

After infection with HIV, a non-specific illness with flu-like symptoms can occur. A rash may develop and lymph nodes may swell. The acute phase of the infection is then followed by a symptom-free stage, usually lasting for months to years.

How can I protect myself?

There is currently no vaccine for HIV. The best protection is through preventive measures such as the use of condoms, which also protects against other sexually transmitted diseases. People at increased risk of infection can also get a doctor to prescribe PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis).

An important pillar of prevention is the educational work carried out by specialist agencies. Further information is available from, for example, the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) or the German AIDS-Hilfe.

How is an HIV infection diagnosed?

If infection is suspected, a sensitive screening test (detection of p24 antigen and antibodies) is carried out first. This is considered to be confirmed negative if there is a six-week interval between the risk contact and the negative test result.

If the test is reactive, the result must be confirmed by a confirmatory test. This can be an antibody immunoblot or a PCR (detection of viral RNA).

If a reactive screening test result is confirmed with one of these methods, a second blood sample is required to confirm the diagnosis.

