

NAM
Acorn House
314-320 Gray's Inn Road
London
WC1X 8DP
Phone: 020 7837 6988
Website: www.aidsmap.com
Email: info@nam.org.uk
Charity number: 1011220

Thanks to all of the professionals and people with HIV who have helped us to develop this leaflet.

The basics

Very recent infection

Notes

Find out more

For more information on this topic

- Read our 'Better off knowing' leaflet.
- Read 'Primary infection' on our website.
- Read our 'Your next steps' booklet.

For more information about HIV

- Visit our website at www.aidsmap.com.

- Speak to an adviser at THT Direct (phone: 0808 802 1221).

For information in other languages

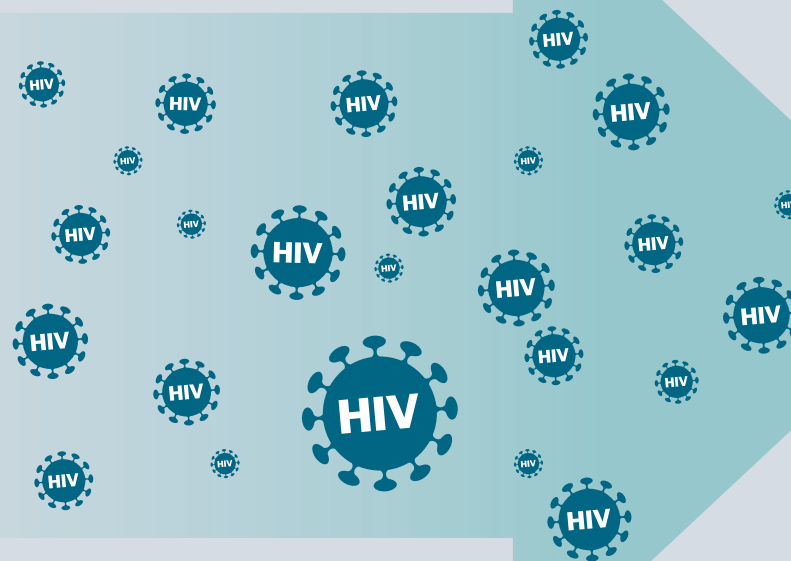
- Visit www.aidsmap.com/translations.

Has this leaflet been useful to you?

Please let us know what you think. Your feedback helps us to improve the services we offer.

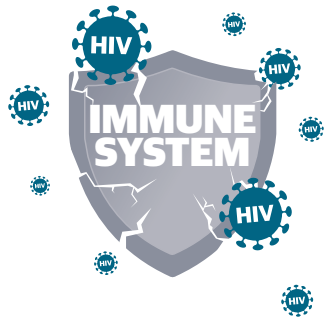
You can contact us to find out more about the scientific research and information we have used to produce this leaflet.

We recommend that you discuss the information in this leaflet with a doctor or other health worker.

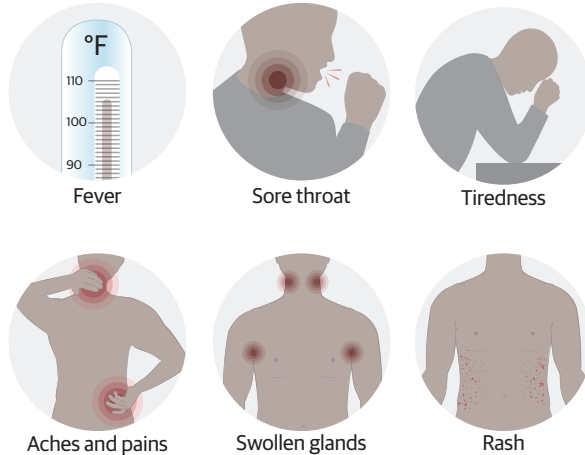


During the first few weeks after becoming infected with HIV, your body's immune system is working out what HIV is and how to get it under control.

1 Your immune system defends your body against infections. But when you are first infected with HIV, your immune system is weakened. Your 'CD4 count' tells you how strong your immune system is.



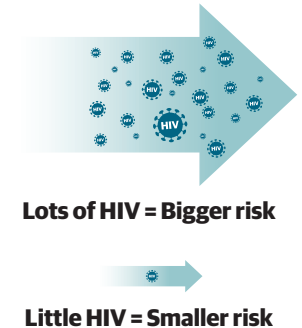
2 You may feel unwell for a short time. This is called seroconversion illness.



3 HIV spreads quickly throughout your body. For the first few months the amount of HIV in the body is very high. This is measured by a viral load test.



4 When you have a lot of HIV in your body (that is, have a high viral load), there is more risk of passing on HIV than at other times. Safer sex is especially important now.



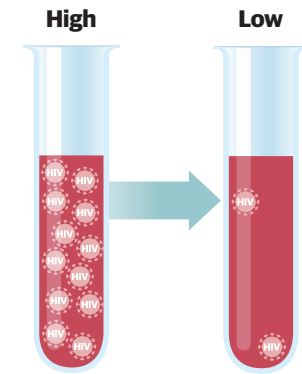
5 Even if you don't take HIV treatment, after a few months your immune system will be better at keeping HIV under control. You will feel better, there will be less HIV in your body and your CD4 count will probably go up.



6 HIV treatment will strengthen your immune system and prevent illnesses. The sooner you start to take it, the sooner you will benefit from it.



7 Treatment will also reduce the amount of HIV to very low levels. This is called having an 'undetectable viral load' and means there is no risk of passing HIV on.



Important points

- In the first few weeks after becoming infected with HIV, your immune system does not know how to fight HIV and so the virus can quickly multiply.
- It's recommended to start HIV treatment as soon as you feel ready.
- Treatment will protect your health and prevent transmission (passing HIV on).