

Glossary

abortion. The ending of pregnancy before the fetus is able to live outside the woman.

acid-fast bacillus. A bacterium that stains red with acid-fast stain (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the cause of tuberculosis, is an acid-fast bacillus).

acupuncture. Traditional Asian health practice of placing thin needles into people's skin to treat illnesses.

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). A group of diseases caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV.

AIDS dementia. Changes in thinking, personality, and mood that occur in some people with HIV infection.

AIDS wasting syndrome. Loss of over 10% of body weight in people with AIDS; this is the reason AIDS has also been called "slim disease."

alcoholic. A person whose consumption of alcohol has negatively affected her or his life (*see* CAGE questions).

anal sex. When a man's penis is inside a woman's or man's anus.

anemia. A lower than normal number of red blood cells that causes people to feel tired and weak.

anergy. Loss of the immune system's ability to respond to certain antigens.

anonymous testing. Testing that does not use real names, so that the identity of a person receiving a test result is unknown.

antibiotic. A drug that kills microbes such as bacteria and fungi.

antibodies. Small proteins that are made by the body's immune system and that recognize and help get rid of foreign organisms and toxins.

antigen. Any foreign substance that causes an immune response.

antiretroviral drug. Any drug that works against a retrovirus. HIV is a retrovirus; zidovudine (AZT) is an antiretroviral drug.

anus. External opening of the bowel.

aphthous ulcers. Painful ulcers in the mouth or throat.

asymptomatic. Without symptoms.

bacillus Calmette-Guérin. A vaccine against tuberculosis.

bacterium. A one-celled microscopic organism. Many bacteria can cause disease.

biopsy. Surgical removal of a piece of tissue for examination under a microscope.

birth control. *See* contraceptive.

bisexual. Someone who is attracted to both men and women.

blood product. A part of the blood, such as red blood cells, platelets, plasma, or clotting factors.

blood transfusion. Giving blood by vein. Transfusions are often given during surgery or to children who have anemia from malaria.

body fluids. Any fluid in the body, for example, blood, urine, saliva, sputum, tears, breast milk, semen, and vaginal secretions.

bone marrow. Tissue in the center of bones that produces blood.

bronchoscopy. Examination of the lungs using a bronchoscope.

CAGE questions. Four questions that can be used to determine if someone may be an alcoholic (*see* Chapter 6).

candida. A fungus that commonly causes disease in the mouth and vagina.

casual contact. Non-intimate behavior such as working, eating, playing, or studying with other people.

CD4 cell. White blood cells that help coordinate the immune system. CD4 cells are infected by HIV.

CD4 cell count. A count of the number of T4 lymphocytes, which gives an idea of the strength of the immune system.

cell. The smallest working unit of a living organism.

cervical dysplasia. Abnormal appearance of the cells from a woman's cervix. Pap smears look for cervical dysplasia (*see* appendix).

cervix. The part of the uterus that is in the vagina.

coccidiomycosis. A disease caused by the fungus *Coccidioides*.

condom. A barrier that is put over the penis before sex to prevent pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV.

confidential testing. Keeping test results private so that only health workers and the person tested know the results.

contraceptive. A product that prevents pregnancy; types include condoms, the Pill, the diaphragm, Depo-Provera, and the intrauterine device (IUD).

cryptococcal meningitis. An illness caused by infection of the covering of the brain with the fungus *Cryptococcus neoformans*.

cutaneous. Having to do with the skin.

cytomegalovirus (CMV). A type of herpes virus that often causes disease in people with damaged immune systems.

dehydration. The condition of a person's body having less water than is necessary to be healthy. Severe diarrhea can lead to dehydration.

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). A substance found in the nucleus of all cells that is the basic component of genes.

drug injector. Someone who injects drugs; generally used in this book to mean someone who injects illegal drugs such as heroin, cocaine, or amphetamines.

ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay). A common test for HIV that looks for antibodies to the virus in a person's blood. Also called EIA.

encephalopathy. Damage to the brain.

epidemic. A higher rate of disease in a community than is expected—usually used to describe infectious diseases.

epidemiology. The study of diseases in populations or communities.

false negative. When a test is negative but a person does have the disease that is being tested for.

false positive. When a test is positive but a person does not have the disease that is being tested for.

family planning. Controlling the number and timing of children. Couples may use abstinence or contraceptives to plan their families.

gastrointestinal. Relating to the mouth, throat, esophagus, stomach, intestines, liver, gallbladder, or pancreas.

gay. Someone attracted to people of the same sex; homosexual.

gene. Unit of DNA that carries information for making proteins and that determines all inherited traits, such as skin color, eye color, and height.

hairy leukoplakia. A white, raised plaque usually found on the side of the tongue.

hemophilia. A disease caused by the lack of a special part of the blood (clotting factor) that allows a person to stop bleeding.

hepatitis. Inflammation of the liver; usually caused by viruses, alcohol, or drugs.

herpes simplex I and II. Viruses that cause cold sores, genital sores, and sometimes encephalitis.

herpes zoster (shingles). Painful blisters on the skin common in people with weakened immune systems; caused by the *Varicella zoster* virus (chicken pox virus).

heterosexual. Someone attracted to people of the opposite sex.

histoplasmosis. A infection, usually of the lungs, caused by the fungus *Histoplasma capsulatum*.

HIV. Human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS.

HIV-sheltered relationship. A sexual relationship in which no one has HIV infection, and no one participates in behaviors that would put her or him at risk for HIV.

homosexual. Someone attracted to people of the same sex.

human papillomavirus. A virus that causes genital warts and cervical cancer; HPV.

IDU. Injection drug user; also known as a drug injector or intravenous drug user (IVDU). Someone who injects drugs in order to become intoxicated.

IM. See intramuscular.

immune system. The body's defense against foreign organisms and substances.

immunity. Resistance to a specific disease.

incidence. The number of new cases of a disease in a community or population over a period of time, usually one year.

incubation period. Time between infection and the first symptoms of disease.

industrialized nations. Countries whose economies are based on manufacturing. Most of the countries in Europe and North America are industrialized.

influenza (flu). A disease of the throat and lungs caused by a virus.

informed consent. Agreement to have a test or procedure after being told the risks and benefits.

injectionist. A person who gives medicines by needle to people outside of a health clinic or hospital.

intramuscular (IM). Injected directly into the muscle.

intravenous (IV). Injected inside a vein.

intravenous needles. Hollow needles used to give drugs or blood, or remove body fluids.

IV. *See* intravenous.

Kaposi's sarcoma. A cancer caused by herpesvirus 8; it is usually characterized by red-purple lesions on the skin or internal organs.

lesbian. A woman who is attracted to other women.

lesion. An abnormal change in tissue caused by disease or injury.

leukopenia. Low white blood cell count.

lumbar puncture. A procedure in which a needle is used to take spinal fluid from the lower back.

lymphadenopathy. Abnormal swelling of the lymph nodes.

lymphocyte. A type of white blood cell.

lymphoma. A cancer of the immune system.

mandatory testing. Required testing.

masturbation. Touching of one's own genitals for sexual pleasure.

menses. Monthly shedding of blood from the lining of the uterus—also called a “period” or “menstruation.”

menstruation. *See* menses.

microbicide. A chemical that kills microbes such as bacteria and viruses.

monogamous. Having sexual relations with only one person.

mutual masturbation. When two people touch each other's genitals with their hands.

neonatal. Regarding the first four weeks of life.

neuropathy. Disorder of the nerves due to infection, disease, drugs, or injury.

nucleus. The central part of the cell that contains DNA.

nutrients. Substances that a person needs to stay healthy; for example, vitamins and minerals.

opportunistic infection. Illness caused by an organism that usually does not cause disease in a person with a normal immune system.

oral rehydration therapy (ORT). A solution of sugar, salts, and water that is used to replace fluid losses. ORT is especially useful for people with diarrhea.

oral sex. When a person's mouth touches a sexual partner's genitals.

organism. Any living thing.

outreach worker. A person who actively seeks out people in her or his community to provide them with education or health care.

parasite. An organism that must live off another organism to survive.

period. *See* menses.

placenta. Tissue within a woman's uterus (womb) that is created during pregnancy to feed the growing fetus.

platelets. Cells in the blood that are responsible for forming blood clots.

Pneumocystis jiroveci pneumonia (PCP). A lung infection that occurs in people with damaged immune systems.

PPD (purified protein derivative). A protein that is used in a skin test to see if a person has been infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

prevalence. The proportion of people in a population who have a disease at a certain time.

prophylaxis. Measures taken to prevent disease.

protease inhibitors. Drugs that stop HIV from putting together copies of itself.

protein. A substance within all living organisms. Protein, along with carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals, is an essential part of a balanced diet.

pulmonary. Having to do with the lungs.

rectum. Part of the bowel before the anus.

retrovirus. A type of virus that must use reverse transcriptase to copy itself.

reverse transcriptase. A substance used by a retrovirus to make DNA from RNA in order to copy itself.

reverse transcriptase inhibitors. A group of drugs used to treat HIV infection that prevent the virus from making copies of itself. These medicines work by preventing the viruses' reverse transcriptase enzyme from working.

risk factor. A practice or characteristic that makes it more likely that a person will get or have a particular illness. For example, getting a blood transfusion from untested blood is a risk factor for HIV infection.

RNA. Genetic information used in cells to make proteins; some viruses, like HIV, use RNA instead of DNA to store genetic information.

role play. Practicing talking with others about difficult topics by acting out an imaginary situation.

safe sex. Sex that has no chance of spreading HIV, such as mutual masturbation.

safer sex. Sex that has little but some chance of spreading HIV, such as vaginal sex with a condom and oral sex.

scarification. The practice of using sharp instruments to cut a person's skin to leave a permanent scar.

semen. A sperm-containing fluid that comes from the penis during sex.

sensitivity. How well a test detects a disease.

seroconversion. Development of antibodies to a foreign organism or antigen in someone who did not have the antibodies before.

seronegative. When a person's blood is negative for antibodies to a particular infection, such as HIV.

seropositive. When a person's blood has antibodies to a particular infection, such as HIV.

serum. Yellow fluid that remains after blood has clotted.

sexual orientation. How a person identifies himself when talking about sexual relationships (as bisexual, homosexual, or heterosexual).

sexually transmitted disease (STD). A disease spread through sex; for example, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV.

sharps. Medical instruments that have sharp points or edges.

shingles. Painful skin blisters caused by the *Varicella zoster* virus (chicken pox virus).

shooting gallery. A place where drug injectors can rent syringes and inject drugs.

side effects. Unintended effects of a medicine, such as diarrhea.

slim disease. A term for AIDS used in some parts of Africa.

specificity. The percentage of times a test for a disease is negative when used on people who do not have the disease.

spermicide. A chemical that kills sperm. Spermicides, used with condoms or as a vaginal foam, can prevent pregnancy.

sterilize/sterilization. A method for cleaning needles and instruments that kills microbes and prevents the spread of disease.

symptoms. A noticeable change in a person's body that indicates the presence of a disease.

syndrome. A group of symptoms or diseases that are used to define an illness.

syphilis. An STD caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*.

syringe. A tube attached to a hollow needle used to inject medicine or take a blood sample.

thrush. Mouth infection caused by the fungus *Candida albicans*.

true negative. When a test is negative and a person does not have the disease that is being tested for.

true positive. When a test is positive and a person does have the disease that is being tested for.

tuberculosis (TB). A disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Most people with TB have pneumonia, meningitis, or bone infection.

unsafe sex. Sex during which HIV is likely to be spread, such as vaginal or anal sex without a condom.

uterus. An organ within a woman's body that supports the growth of a fetus.

vaccine. A substance used to prevent infection by a disease-causing organism.

vaginal sex. When a man's penis is inside a woman's vagina.

vertical transmission. The spread of a disease from mother to baby.

virus. A small organism that needs other organisms' cells to reproduce.

wasting. See "AIDS wasting syndrome."

Western blot. A test for HIV that looks for specific antibodies against the virus.