



Get the facts.



Get tested.



Talk to your partner(s).



Protect yourself.

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Turning Point
Program

Ph: 306-786-0637

HIV - Every Door is the Right Door for Information

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and an estimated 1 in 5 people living with HIV in Canada are unaware of their HIV infection. It is a virus that has the ability to weaken the immune system. Without treatment, HIV makes the defense system crumble and the immune system can no longer defend the body. People with HIV before the AIDS stage do not usually have symptoms, although some experience flu-like symptoms for a short period a few weeks after the infection. **HIV is a treatable disease. With treatment, a person with HIV can lead a healthy life.**

Anyone can get HIV, no matter your age, gender, race, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin. You can get or transmit HIV only through specific activities, most commonly, through unprotected sexual behaviours and by sharing needles or other drug injection equipment. HIV can also be passed by sharing needles or ink to get tattoos, by sharing improperly sterilized needles or jewelry for body piercing or acupuncture, or to a fetus or baby during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

You can have HIV without knowing it and, at the same time, be passing it along to others. The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested. Knowing your status is important because it helps you make healthy decisions to prevent getting or transmitting HIV. Testing is recommended for all. It is crucial to test people and diagnose them as early as possible.

It is important to know how HIV is transmitted but also just as important to understand how HIV is **not** transmitted. You **cannot** contract HIV by hugging, shaking hands, sharing toilets, sharing dishes or closed-mouth kissing; through saliva, tears or sweat that is not mixed with the blood of an HIV-positive person; by mosquitoes, ticks or other blood-sucking insects or through the air.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent HIV infection. Significant advances in the care and treatment of HIV have been made which are very effective and available to everyone who needs it so that one can stay healthy and live a long, productive life. Treatment of HIV is part of the prevention, in that it helps to stop the transmission of the virus. The Turning Point Program, based at SIGN in Yorkton, is a client-centered, harm reduction and strength-based program that meets individuals and helps those affected by HIV or Hepatitis C. The health region offers confidential point of care testing that can be requested as part of routine blood work during regular medical clinic visits or visits to the Emergency Room.

If you or a family member would like to be tested, please contact your family physician, nurse practitioner or your local Public Health Office. You can also visit any emergency room weekdays 8:30 am-4:00 pm and request the test. For more information, visit our website at www.sunrisehealthregion.sk.ca and click the "HIV Info and Testing" link under the "Health Services" tab.