

3 Is there a connection between HIV and AIDS?



The Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse, a program of the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), provides information resources on HIV prevention, care and treatment as well as a range of other HIV/AIDS information.

These resources are provided primarily to individuals and organizations working in the areas of HIV/AIDS health and education, as well as those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. We do not endorse, recommend or advocate any specific approach to HIV treatment. This material is not intended as a substitute for the advice of a health professional. Decisions about particular medical treatments should always be made in consultation with a qualified medical practitioner knowledgeable about HIV-related illness and the treatment in question. While we update our material regularly, users should be aware that information changes rapidly. Material obtained through the Clearinghouse may not necessarily be the most current information available. The resources could include technical inaccuracies or typographical errors. Changes are periodically added to the information herein: these changes will be incorporated into new editions of the publication. We recommend that you see your health professional for advice on specific questions relating to your health. We urge users to consult a broad range of information and/or contact us at 1-877-999-7740 for more details. Users relying on this information do so entirely at their own risk. The Clearinghouse and CPHA do not accept any responsibility for damage that may result from the use or misuse of this information.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse, the Canadian Public Health Association or Health Canada.



Funding for this publication was provided by Health Canada.

Yes! Thousands of scientists and researchers around the world say there is a link between HIV and AIDS. Very few experts in science or medicine have disagreed.

In 2000, more than 5,000 scientists from all over the world signed the Durban Declaration which states clearly that there is a huge amount of scientific evidence that HIV causes AIDS.

At the end of 2000, more than 36 million people in the world were living with HIV and 3 million had died from AIDS-related illnesses. Worldwide, there are an estimated 16,000 new infections each day. By 2004, AIDS will be the number one killer of people in the world.

Accepting that HIV causes AIDS means that prevention efforts can continue. Prevention strategies—including awareness, education, condom use and harm reduction—reduce HIV transmission.

How does HIV cause AIDS?

HIV infects and destroys blood cells that a person's immune system needs to work. HIV stays in the body for years, destroying blood cells until their immune system is so damaged that they develop AIDS (also known as advanced HIV disease). At this stage, HIV has weakened their immune system to the point that they can no longer fight off certain types of infections that other people can fight.

In Canada, a doctor diagnoses AIDS when a person with HIV develops one or more of a number of specific illnesses which indicate AIDS, such as recurrent bacterial pneumonia, pulmonary tuberculosis or invasive cervical cancer. These illnesses are sometimes referred to as opportunistic infections. A person can still be very ill with HIV but not have an AIDS diagnosis.

For more information, contact your local AIDS service organization or health care practitioner.

For more copies of this fact sheet or other documents on HIV/AIDS, contact the
Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse, 400-1565 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1Z 8R1

☎ 877-999-7740 ☎ 613-725-1205 ✉ aidssida@cpha.ca www.clearinghouse.cpha.ca

Published by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse, a program of the Canadian Public Health Association.
Based on material originally created by the HIV/AIDS Affiliate of the Canadian Health Network in partnership
with the Canadian AIDS Society and the Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange. Revised and
Updated March 2002. Permission is granted for non-commercial reproduction for educational purposes.

For more information on HIV/AIDS or for local services, contact: