

5

things you might
not know about

HIV

1

HIV stands for...

Human Immunodeficiency Virus. This means that HIV is a virus that attacks your immune system, which is your body's defense against infections.

2

HIV is spread by...

sexual fluids (semen, vaginal fluids) and blood. This means that it can be transmitted through any sexual activity in which you come in contact with sexual fluids - not just penetrative sex. If you have even a small cut on your hand, and you touch a sexual fluid, you can contract HIV. HIV cannot be transmitted through saliva, sweat, or tears. You cannot get HIV from touching, hugging, eating/drinking with, or sharing toilet seats with someone who has HIV.

3

HIV is treated by...

medication. HIV cannot be cured, but it can definitely be managed if you stick to your medication as directed by your doctor! To prevent HIV, remember to use condoms every time you have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) and to get tested for HIV before you have sex with someone new.

4

HIV testing is...

done with a finger prick (blood test) or oral swab (around your gums). The blood test is slightly more accurate because it looks for the HIV virus itself, while the oral test looks for antibodies (cells that your body will eventually make to fight the HIV virus). If you are concerned about being exposed to HIV, a blood test is the most reliable and best method to detect HIV earlier than the oral swab test. **Talk to a doctor to get tested!** You **must** notify anyone who has been in contact with your blood or sexual fluids if you test positive for HIV. tellyourpartner.org is a good option if you need to keep it anonymous.

5

PrEP stands for...

pre-exposure prophylaxis, and is an oral pill that is taken to help protect you in the case of a future exposure to HIV. If you are interested in learning more about PrEP, talk to a Violet provider to determine if PrEP is right for you!

For more information, check
out violetproject.org/stis

