

A

1. ABC

The ABC approach to behavior change promotes the adoption of the following three behaviors as central to HIV prevention efforts:

A – Abstaining from sexual activity or delaying the age of the first sexual experience

B – Being faithful or practicing mutual monogamy with an uninfected partner

C – Correct and consistent condom use

2. Abstinence

Refraining from sexual activity. In the context of HIV/AIDS, this term also refers to delaying the age of first sexual experience or sexual debut.

3. Accidental Exposure or Accidental Transmission

This usually refers to HIV exposure or transmission that occurs in the health care setting. Transmission can occur from patient to provider or vice-versa.

4. Acute HIV Infection

The first stage of HIV infection, this is the period immediately following infection with HIV. The length of the acute stage can last anywhere from a few days to several weeks. HIV multiplies rapidly and can be transmitted to others during this time. Acute HIV infection is also known as primary HIV infection (PHI).

5. ADAP – AIDS Drug Assistance Program(s)

AIDS Drug Assistance Programs are U.S. federally funded, state-administered programs. They provide HIV-related medications to people with HIV/AIDS with limited or no health insurance coverage. The programs vary widely across the country as eligibility for ADAP is determined on a state-by-state basis, as are the drugs that are covered.

6. Affected Community

Persons living with HIV/AIDS, and other related individuals including their families and friends, whose lives are directly influenced by HIV infection and its physical, social and emotional effects.

7. AIDS

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is the stage at which an individual's immune system is weakened by HIV to the point where they develop any number of diseases or cancers. People who haven't had one of these diseases or cancers, but whose immune system is shown by a laboratory test to be severely damaged, are also considered to have progressed to an AIDS diagnosis.

8. AIDS-Defining Illness

These include a variety of conditions that occur at late stages of HIV disease and that signal progression to AIDS. According to UNAIDS, many individuals first become aware of their infection at this stage.

9. AIDS Dementia Complex (ADC)

AIDS Dementia Complex, also known as HIV Dementia, is a condition caused by HIV that affects the brain and causes a person to lose their mental ability. Symptoms include loss of coordination and interest in one's surroundings, mood swings, and mental dysfunction. Memory loss and limited mobility can also develop. ADC usually occurs after a person has developed serious opportunistic infections, but can also occur at an earlier stage. ADC can be prevented and treated with antiretroviral therapy.

10. Antenatal

Occurring before birth (as in HIV exposure or transmission from mother to infant during pregnancy).

11. Antibodies

Molecules in the body that identify and destroy foreign (unfamiliar) substances such as bacteria and viruses. Standard HIV tests identify whether or not antibodies to HIV (HIV antibodies) are present in the blood. A positive HIV test signals that antibodies are present.

12. Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)

ART refers to any of a range of treatments that include antiretroviral (ARV) medications. The drugs that are used in the treatment of HIV, a retrovirus, are designed to interfere with the virus' ability to replicate itself and, therefore, slow the progression of the disease.

13. Asymptomatic

A person with HIV is asymptomatic if they do not show signs and symptoms of the disease. This is also the second stage of HIV disease progression and can last for many years after infection. The virus can be transmitted during this stage.

C

14. Care, Treatment and Support

Care, treatment and support encompass the range of interventions necessary to take care of people living with HIV/AIDS, including *antiretroviral therapy*, treatment and prevention of *opportunistic infections*, nutritional support, psychological and community and home support. Care, treatment and support are increasingly seen as being inextricably linked to each other.

15. CD4 (T4) Cell Count

These cells control the body's immune response against infections and are the primary targets for HIV. HIV multiplies within these cells and eventually destroys them. As a result, the immune system becomes progressively weaker. CD4 cell count is used as one measure of HIV disease progression. The lower a person's CD4 cell count, the more advanced the HIV disease and deterioration of the immune system.

16. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The United States Federal agency responsible for protecting individuals' health and safety. The CDC's activities emphasize disease prevention, control, health education and health promotion. The CDC also conducts international prevention activities for HIV, TB, malaria and other diseases.

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17. Circumcision

The procedure, in which the foreskin of the penis is removed, has been shown in randomized controlled trials to reduce the risk of HIV transmission from women to men. In 2007, the World Health Organization and UNAIDS recommended that circumcision be considered “an important intervention” in reducing the risk of heterosexually acquired HIV infection in men. The health organizations view the procedure as one part of a comprehensive prevention program.

18. Clinical Trial

A scientific study designed to evaluate the safety, *efficacy* and medical effects of a treatment (e.g., *antiretroviral therapy, vaccine*). A treatment must proceed through several phases of clinical trials before it is approved for use in humans.

19. Combination (Antiretroviral) Therapy

The use of two or more antiretroviral drugs in combination. The use of three or more antiretroviral drugs is often referred to as *HAART* or *Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy*.

20. Complementary & Alternative Therapies

Treatments that are outside the scope of Western medicine. The effectiveness of these therapies in combating HIV infection has not been proven.

21. Concurrent Sexual Partnerships

Having more than one sexual partner at a time. The practice raises the risk of contracting HIV and is increasingly recognized as a significant factor in the high prevalence rate of HIV in Africa.

22. Cross Resistance

The phenomenon where HIV resistance to one drug (see *drug resistance*) prompts resistance to other drugs in the same drug class. An example of this is nevirapine resistance resulting in resistance to efavirenz.

D

23. DDT

DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) was the main insecticide used during the 1950s and 1960s in the *World Health Organization's* (WHO) global campaign to eradicate the mosquitoes that carry malaria. DDT has a history of being a highly controversial insecticide. It has been banned from agricultural use in almost all countries. Currently, the WHO recommends use of DDT for malaria control through indoor spraying. Through WHO's efforts, malaria was successfully eradicated from North America and Europe.

24. Down Low

A term that has been used to refer to men who have sex with men but do not necessarily identify as gay or bisexual and may not disclose this information to others. They may also be having sexual relations with women.

25. Drug-Drug Interaction

A situation where a drug changes the way another drug works in the body, also known as a *synergistic* effect. This can result in increased or decreased effectiveness of either drug. Drug-drug interactions can also lead to unintended side effects.

26. Drug Resistance

The ability of HIV to reproduce despite the presence of anti-HIV drugs. Drug resistance results from *mutations* that arise during HIV replication.

27. Dry Sex

Refers to the practice of women using various agents to “dry out” the vagina before sexual intercourse. This practice is often based on cultural beliefs, but inadvertently can increase the risk of HIV transmission because condoms break more easily from the friction and a dry vaginal wall can lead to tears and lacerations during intercourse.

E

28. Efficacy

The measurement of a drug’s or treatment’s ability to heal, regardless of dose. For example, the efficacy of an *antiretroviral* drug is the most benefit that the drug can cause without considering how much of the drug is taken.

29. Endemic

The constant presence of a disease or infectious agent within a given geographic area or population group; can also refer to the usual prevalence of a given disease within such area or group.

30. End-stage Disease

The four stages of HIV disease are acute infection, asymptomatic, chronic symptomatic and AIDS. Although AIDS is the end-stage of HIV disease, it is possible to live for years after an AIDS diagnosis given appropriate drug therapy.

31. Epidemic (types – low, concentrated, generalized, hyperendemic)

The occurrence of more cases of disease than expected in a given area or among a specific group of people over a particular period of time.

There are different ways to describe the distribution of an HIV epidemic in an area:

- Low-level – HIV prevalence is low across the general population and is still low among higher-risk sub-populations
- Concentrated – HIV prevalence does not exceed 1% of the general population but does exceed 5% of some sub-populations (e.g., among sex workers, *IDU*, *MSM*)
- Generalized – HIV prevalence exceeds 1% of the general population
- Hyperendemic – HIV prevalence exceeds 15% of the general population

F**32. Feminization**

The word used to describe the increasing impact the HIV/AIDS pandemic is having on women. In South Africa, for example, far more women than men are HIV-positive. Globally, approximately half of those living with HIV are women.

33. Fixed Dose Combination (FDC)

Fixed dose combination treatment refers to a combination of two or more drug products, such as antiretrovirals, in a single pill. An example of FDC is the single-pill combination of stavudine, lamivudine and nevirapine.

G**34. Gender Inequality**

A phrase typically used to describe the second-class status women hold in many societies affected by the AIDS epidemic. This is important to consider in the context of the AIDS epidemic because the inequality often leaves them unable to negotiate sexual situations, which increases their risk of contracting HIV. Gender inequality is increasingly seen as a major driver of the AIDS epidemic.

35. Generic

A drug that is identical, or bioequivalent, to a brand name drug in dosage, safety, strength, how it is taken, quality, performance, and intended use. The generic name of a drug is the common name of a drug, which is not protected under any manufacturer's copyright. It is the more commonly used format when referring to a drug in medical literature. In addition, generic sometimes refers to less expensive, but chemically identical, medications manufactured by companies that did not invent the drug. In some countries, generic drugs come on the market after a patent on the drug has expired. In other countries, generic drugs are manufactured and sold even before a patent expires.

36. GIPA (Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS)

The phrase reflects the recognition that people who are HIV-positive must be involved in every aspect of responding to the epidemic ranging from HIV prevention, testing and counseling to participating in policy forums. The principle was adopted at the Paris AIDS summit in 1994, establishing that GIPA is, in the words of UNAIDS, "critical to ethical and effective national responses to the epidemic."

37. Global Fund

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was created in 2001 at the urging of then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The Global Fund is a partnership among governments, the private sector and affected communities. It is an independent grant-making organization whose purpose is to raise and provide funding to developing countries fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

H

38. Highly Active Antiretroviral Treatment (HAART)

A course of treatment that involves the use of three or more antiretrovirals.

39. HIV Test

The standard HIV diagnostic test looks for the presence of HIV antibodies in the blood or in oral fluid. HIV antibodies are molecules produced by the body once it detects the presence of HIV. The production of HIV antibodies does not happen immediately after exposure to the virus. The period after infection, but before production of antibodies, is called the window period. During the window period, an HIV test may be negative. It is possible to test negative despite the presence of HIV in the body. There are several different kinds of HIV tests used to screen for the presence of antibodies.

40. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

The virus that causes AIDS. HIV can be transmitted through infected blood, semen, vaginal secretions, breast milk and during pregnancy or delivery. There are two types of HIV: HIV-1 and HIV-2. Both are transmitted through the same methods/manners and result in progression to AIDS. HIV-1 is responsible for the overwhelming majority of global infections, whereas HIV-2 is less widespread and primarily found in West Africa.

41. Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to HIV

The general recognition that human rights must be promoted and protected in the context of dealing with the AIDS epidemic. The UN's *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights* underscore the links between the protection of human rights—such as gender equality and non-discrimination—and providing an effective response to the epidemic.

I

42. IDU

Acronym for Injection Drug User(s), and refers to individuals who use needles/syringes to inject drugs. This is a major risk for HIV infection in many parts of the world.

43. Immune System

The body's system of defense against foreign organisms such as bacteria, viruses or fungi.

44. Immunodeficiency

A state where the immune system cannot defend itself against infection. HIV progressively weakens the immune system and causes immunodeficiency.

45. Immunosuppression

A state where the immune system cannot function normally because it has been weakened. This can arise from drugs and medical treatments (chemotherapy) or diseases (HIV). An immune system that is immunosuppressed may also be referred to as immunocompromised.

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46. Incidence

The number of new cases of a disease in a population over a specific period of time (e.g., annual number of new HIV cases in a country).

47. Incubation Period

The period of time between HIV infection and the onset of symptoms.

M**48. Malaria**

Malaria is a disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to humans via mosquito bites. Symptoms of infection may include fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, fatigue, nausea and vomiting. These symptoms usually appear between 9 and 14 days after a person is bitten by an infected mosquito. In severe cases, the disease can be life threatening.

49. MDR-TB

Acronym for “multidrug resistant tuberculosis,” a strain of tuberculosis that is resistant to two or more anti-TB drugs. MDR-TB usually arises when people take only enough medication to feel better, but not the full amount prescribed by a physician. The weaker bacteria are killed, but the stronger bacteria survive and reproduce. These stronger bacteria, when fully grown and causing sickness again, cannot be killed with the same treatment and require larger doses of the drug or an entirely new, stronger drug. MDR-TB is a large problem in developing countries, where continual supervision of treatment and access to health care are not always possible.

50. Microbicides

Microbicides are products designed to reduce the transmission of microbes. Research is underway to determine whether microbicides can be developed to successfully reduce the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Microbicides would be applied topically, either in the vagina or anus and could be produced in many forms, including films, creams, gels, suppositories or as a ring or sponge that releases the active ingredient over time.

51. Mother-to-Child Transmission

This refers to transmission of HIV from an HIV-positive mother to her child during pregnancy, labor and delivery or breast-feeding. Transmission from mother to child is also referred to as *perinatal* and *vertical transmission*.

52. MSM

Acronym for “men who have sex with men.” For assessing disease risk, use of the term “MSM” is often used instead of “gay,” “homosexual” or “bisexual” because it refers to a risk behavior, rather than an identity that may or may not be tied to a behavior. In many countries and cultures, men who have sex with other men may not perceive themselves as gay or bisexual.

53. MTCT

This stands for “mother-to-child transmission.”

54. Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB)

See *MDR-TB*.

55. Mutation

A change in an organism’s genetic structure that arises during the process of multiplication. HIV multiplies quickly and changes form during the process. These changes allow for the formation of *drug resistant* strains of the virus.

O**56. Opportunistic Infection (OI)**

Diseases that rarely occur in healthy people but cause infections in individuals whose *immune systems* are compromised, including by HIV infection. These disease organisms are frequently present in the body but are generally kept under control by a healthy immune system. When a person infected with HIV develops an OI, they are considered to have progressed to an AIDS diagnosis.

57. Orphans

A child who has lost a parent to HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS estimates that about 15 million children under the age of 18 have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. Use of the phrase “AIDS orphans” is discouraged as it stigmatizes these children and also suggests they are HIV-positive when that may not be the case.

P**58. Pandemic**

A worldwide epidemic; occurring over a wide geographic area and affecting an exceptionally high proportion of the population.

59. Pathogen

An organism or virus that causes disease.

60. PEPFAR

The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is a US\$15 billion, five-year initiative, initially announced in 2003 by U.S. President George W. Bush to address HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria in developing countries.

61. Perinatal Transmission

Transmission of HIV from an HIV-positive mother to her child during pregnancy, labor and delivery or breastfeeding. Perinatal transmission is also known as *mother-to-child transmission* or *vertical transmission*.

62. Placebo

A substance that resembles a real medication but has no medical effect.

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63. PMTCT

PMTCT stands for “prevention of *mother-to-child transmission*.” UNAIDS outlines a three-part strategy to prevent HIV transmission from an HIV-positive mother to her child.

- a. Protect females of child-bearing age against HIV infection.
- b. Avoid unwanted pregnancies among HIV-positive women.
- c. Prevent transmission during pregnancy, delivery and breast-feeding by providing voluntary counseling and testing, *antiretroviral therapy*, safe delivery practices and breast milk substitutes when appropriate.

64. PMTCT Plus

PMTCT is “*prevention of mother-to-child transmission*” of HIV which is described above. The “plus” refers to providing anti-retroviral treatment to the mother even after the recommended course of therapy for prevention of transmission to the child has ended.

65. Prevalence

Prevalence is a measure of the proportion of the population that has a disease at a specific period in time (e.g., number of people living with HIV).

66. Prevention (primary, secondary)

In the context of HIV, prevention activities are designed to reduce the risk of becoming infected with HIV (primary prevention) and the risk of transmitting the disease to others (secondary prevention). Prevention services include voluntary counseling and testing, condom distribution, disease surveillance, outreach and education, and blood safety and harm reduction programs for intravenous drug users.

67. Primary HIV Infection (PHI)

The first stage of HIV infection, this is the period immediately following infection with HIV. The length of this stage can last for several weeks. HIV multiplies very often and can be transmitted to others during this time. PHI is also known as *acute HIV infection*.

68. Prophylaxis

Prophylaxis refers to the prevention or protective treatment of disease. Primary prophylaxis refers to the medical treatment that is given to prevent onset of an infection. Secondary prophylaxis refers to medications given to prevent recurrent symptoms in an existing infection.

69. PLHIV / PWA / PLWA / PLWHA

Acronyms for “People living with HIV,” “People with HIV/AIDS,” and “People living with HIV/AIDS,” PLHIV is the preferred description, according to UNAIDS, because it “reflects the fact that an infected person may continue to live well and productively for many years.”

R**70. Risky Behavior**

This refers to any behavior or action that increases an individual's probability of acquiring or transmitting HIV. Some examples of risky behaviors are having unprotected sex, having unprotected sex with multiple partners and injecting drugs with contaminated equipment. Alcohol use has also been linked to risky behavior because of its effect on an individual's ability to make decisions and negotiate safer sex.

S**71. Scale Up**

Refers to the concept of achieving a sufficient level of coverage, uptake, intensity, and duration of an HIV intervention to enable the intended effect.

72. Sexually Transmitted Disease/Infection (STD/STI)

Any disease or infection that is spread through sexual contact.

73. Social Marketing

An approach or technique that refers to the adaptation of commercial marketing techniques to achieve social goals and encourage the adoption of healthier behavior. Social marketing has been used to promote a range of HIV-related prevention techniques including condom use.

74. Stigma and Discrimination

Stigma and discrimination toward HIV-positive people, and those perceived to be HIV-positive, are recognized as obstacles to achieving full access to prevention, treatment and support services. The stigma and discrimination that those at risk, and those living with HIV, may face from governments, communities and families make it less likely the at-risk will seek out care and information.

T**75. Tuberculosis (TB)**

Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The disease usually affects the lungs but can spread to other parts of the body in serious cases. An individual can become infected with TB when another person who has active TB coughs, sneezes, or spits. Not all people who become infected with TB develop symptoms. Those who do not become ill are referred to as having latent TB and cannot spread the disease to others.

U**76. UNAIDS**

Acronym that refers to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. It is a part of the UN and was established to coordinate its response to HIV/AIDS. Currently, 10 UN organizations and a Secretariat comprise UNAIDS.

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77. Universal Precautions

Infection control measures used in health care settings aimed at preventing the transmission of HIV (and other blood-borne pathogens). These measures include the use of gloves and other protective gear, and the safe disposal of needles to prevent exposure to blood and other body fluids.

V**78. Vaccine**

A substance that contains a deactivated infectious organism designed to stimulate the immune system to protect against subsequent infection from the active organism. A preventive vaccine preempts infection from that organism. A therapeutic vaccine improves the ability of the immune system of a person already infected with the organism to defend itself.

79. VCT

“Voluntary Counseling and Testing” programs are a critical component of both HIV prevention and treatment activities. VCT is an internationally accepted intervention designed to enable people to learn their HIV status and receive counseling about risk reduction and referral to care if they are HIV-positive. Voluntary HIV testing approaches have relied on both client-initiated or opt-in testing (where the client asks to be tested) and provider-initiated or opt-out testing (where a provider offers testing to a client). Recently, there has been a move to provider-initiated testing to encourage more people to get tested and to make testing a more routine procedure in the health care environment.

80. Vertical Transmission

Transmission of HIV from an HIV-positive mother to her child during pregnancy, birth or breast-feeding. Vertical transmission is also referred to as *mother-to-child* or *perinatal transmission*.

81. Viral Load

The amount or concentration of HIV in the blood. There is a correlation between the amount of virus in the blood and the severity of disease—the higher the viral load, the more progressive the HIV disease. A viral load test is an important tool for doctors in monitoring illness and determining treatment decisions.

82. Vulnerable Populations

Populations that are at increased risk of exposure to HIV due to socioeconomic, cultural or behavioral factors. Vulnerable populations include racial and ethnic minorities, refugees, poor people, men who have sex with men, injection drug users, sex workers, and women where gender inequality is pronounced.

W**83. World Bank**

The World Bank is a development bank that provides loans, policy advice, technical assistance and knowledge sharing services to low- and middle-income countries to reduce poverty. The World Bank is a co-sponsor of UNAIDS and a significant donor to international HIV/AIDS efforts.

84. World Health Organization (WHO)

The WHO is the United Nations agency for health. It is governed by 192 member states and aims to help all individuals achieve the highest possible level of health. It is internationally recognized as one of the leading organizations dedicated to global health, including the prevention and treatment of HIV.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For other suggested HIV/AIDS-related glossaries, go to GlobalHealthReporting.org: www.globalhealthreporting.org/reportingmanuals

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