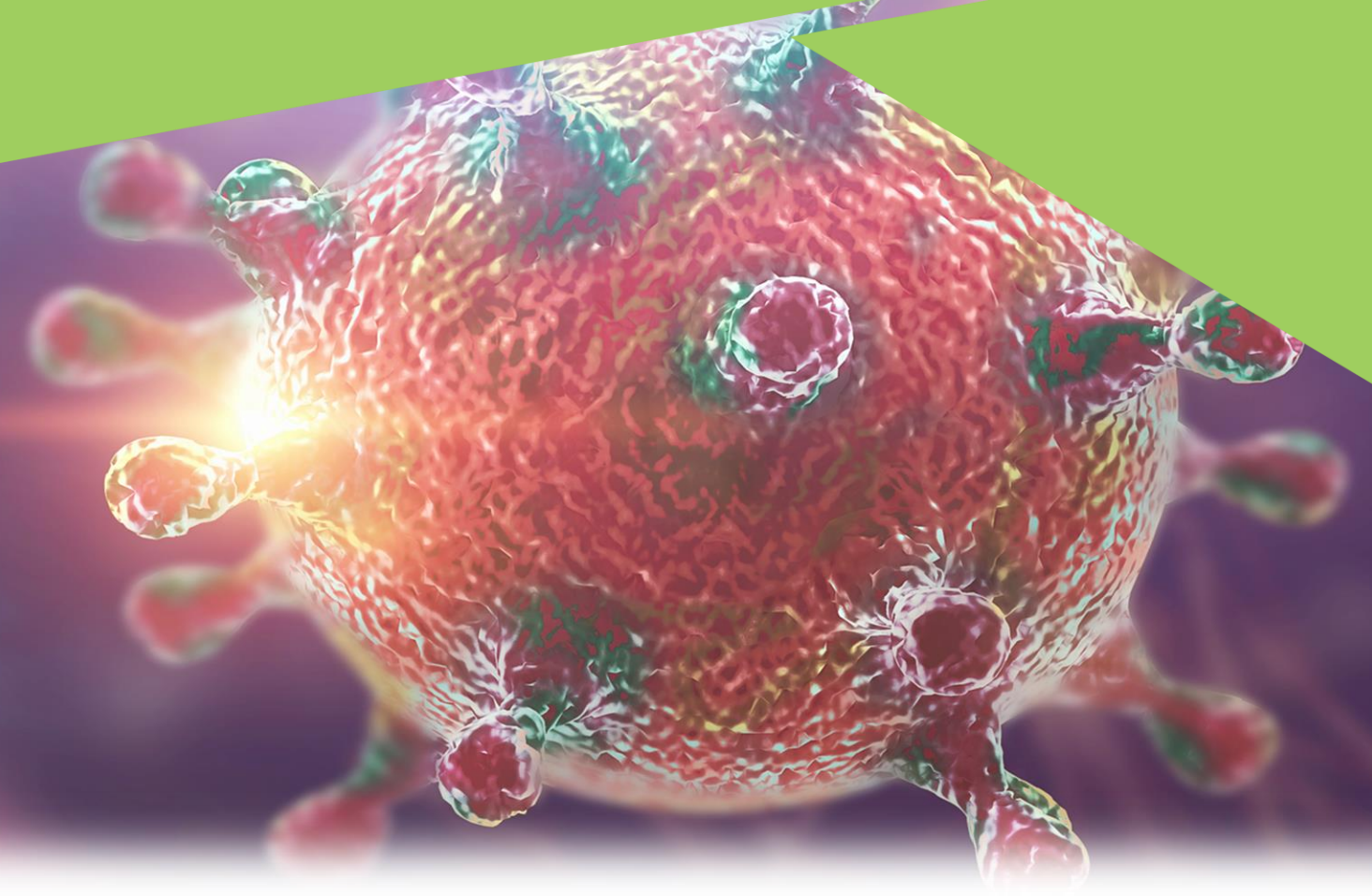


# HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV)



## What is HIV?

HIV attacks your body's immune system and destroys your white blood cells. With a weakened immune system, you become more prone to infections and diseases.

## How Does HIV Spread?

HIV spreads when you have:

- Unprotected sex with an infected person who is not on treatment and has a high viral load (large amount of HIV particles in their body), and being in contact with infected body fluids (e.g. semen)
- Transfusion of infected blood
- Contact with infected blood through the sharing of needles and other piercing instruments
- Mother-to-child during pregnancy and via breastfeeding

## What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms vary depending on stage of infection. Some early symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headaches
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- General discomfort
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Skin rash
- Night sweat
- Persistent diarrhoea

## How Can I Be Treated?

HIV is a lifelong condition. It is important to seek treatment early as without it, HIV can develop into Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Your doctor might recommend an antiretroviral therapy, which prevents the virus from multiplying and is highly effective. It can help improve your immune system and suppress the virus to undetectable levels.



## How Can I Protect Myself from HIV?

- ✓ Practice safe sex and remain faithful to your partner
- ✓ Avoid sharing needles



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