

DEBUNKED

HIV Myths

"If I take a drink after my Dad, can I get his HIV?"

"Have sex in a hot tub – infections can't spread in the water"

Welcome to Debunked – your trusted source for accurate, clear answers to those statements about STIs you've heard around, but aren't 100% sure are factual. This issue, we're tackling HIV myths.

HIV can be transmitted by mosquitos.

MYTH

HIV cannot be transmitted by insects (like mosquitos or ticks).



Only people who are promiscuous have HIV.

MYTH

Any one engaging in unprotected sex is at risk for HIV, regardless of their frequency of engaging in unprotected sex. HIV is transmitted through bodily fluids making contact with a mucous membrane, damaged tissue, or injected into the bloodstream. Bodily fluids that can carry the virus are seminal fluid, blood, pre-seminal fluids, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. Choosing protection (condom, PrEP, being virally suppressed, etc.) can reduce your risk for transmission.

Saliva can transmit HIV.

MYTH

Saliva and other forms of casual contact (hugging, sharing glasses, etc.) do not transmit HIV. HIV can only be transmitted through an exchange of bodily fluids between a person who has HIV and a person who does not have HIV. In the exchange of bodily fluids between a person living with HIV and a person not living with HIV, there is a risk for transmission.

There is a cure for HIV.

MYTH

There is not a cure for HIV. Those who tell you there is are incorrect. The case that many point to as "proof" of a cure for HIV is that of Timothy Ray Brown, commonly known as "The Berlin Patient". Timothy Ray Brown received a bone marrow transplant for his leukemia and a stem cell transplant from a donor naturally immune to HIV. Since the procedure he has not needed to take antiretroviral medication to maintain low HIV viral levels, but HIV is still in his body.

While there may not be a cure for HIV, there are much improved medications which when adherent provide a high quality of life for those living with HIV. 🌱

HIV is most commonly transmitted through sexual behaviors or needle/syringe use. Take care to reduce your risk as able and get tested regularly! If you'd like a free HIV test, contact gettested@prismntx.org.