

What is HIV? (OPTIONAL)

Year: Y6

Subjects and Issues

💡Illness 💡Prejudice 💡Safety 💡Science 💡Viruses
💡Relationships education 💡Sexual Intercourse 💡STI
💡HIV 💡Stigma

This session contains non-statutory sex education, as it teaches how HIV is transmitted through sexual activity and how this can be prevented through the use of condoms. Please make sure all parents have been informed of their right to withdraw.

Introduction

Introduce the term HIV, which stands for *human immunodeficiency virus*. Brainstorm all the different things the children have heard of about HIV. Just record their ideas at this stage - the list will be reviewed at the end of the lesson, when children have learnt more about it.

Activity 1 - How do people get ill?

Draw an outline of two people on the board or use the IWB resources (see Resources needed area). Ask the children to name all the illnesses and infections that they have heard of and write them next to the relevant body parts on one outline. Then ask them to think about all the different ways that illnesses, etc, can be passed between two people.

Write these around the second body outline. (Suggestions may include; e.g. breathing, sneezing, hands/touch, getting very close to someone, kissing, sharing things you put in your mouth, through sharing needles and through sex).

Explain that different illnesses are passed on in different ways. If the children don't mention it, explain that sexual activity is another way that some infections can be passed



on, as people's bodies are in very close contact with each other and semen and vaginal fluids are passed from one person to another if they do not use any protection (a condom).

What is HIV?

Explain that there are a number of specific infections that can be spread through sex and one of these is HIV. Explain that HIV is a virus and a lifelong condition. People living with HIV need to take medication every day to stay healthy or they will develop a range of serious illnesses, some of which are life-threatening. Ask children what they remember about the immune system and how it works [when infections get into the body, white blood cells rush around the body and fight it off]

Explain that HIV is particularly difficult for the immune system to fight off because part of the virus attacks the immune system. When HIV gets in and attacks the immune system it means that all sorts of other germs, bacteria and viruses can move around the body without any way of being killed off, and it is this that can make people very poorly.

Activity 2 – How is HIV transmitted?

Emphasise that HIV is a difficult virus to transmit and that it doesn't transmit like many other viruses. Go back to the people diagram and cross out the ways (maybe with a red pen) in which HIV **cannot** be transmitted [getting close, sitting next to, sharing cups, spoons, etc., kissing, holding hands, toilets seats, touching, sneezing.]

Stress that the most common ways HIV is passed to another person is through the sharing of needles e.g. syringes or other injecting drug equipment, or sexual activity without using a condom. It can also be passed from mother to baby or through blood-to-blood transfusions, although this is unlikely to happen in the UK, but can happen in other parts of the world.

Explain that if a person gets HIV, they may get flu like symptoms to begin with, then depending on whether they live a healthy lifestyle, they might not feel unwell again for a while. However, eventually they will start to get unwell as

their immune system isn't able to fight off the infection - it gets weaker and HIV gets stronger. That's why it's really important for people to get tested as soon as they think they might have HIV, so that they can take medicine that will help keep their immune system strong. This gives them the best chance of staying healthy and living a long life.

Also, if a person takes their medication effectively for the rest of their life they won't be able to pass HIV on to anyone else after six months of taking it.

For more information [National AIDS Trust FAQs](#).

Also:

[Terrance Higgins Trust, About HIV: Can't Pass it On.](#)

Activity 3 - Living with HIV

Ask the children:

- What do you think someone who had just found out they had HIV would feel like? [scared, shocked, worried]
- What would they need? [health care to provide information and access to medication, supportive friends and family]
- How would they want to be treated? [with respect and understanding]
- Why are some people scared about HIV and prejudiced towards people living with HIV? [they don't understand how it is passed from one person to another, so are worried they might get it easily. They might think that you automatically die if you get HIV. Their prejudice often comes from fear as well lack of knowledge]
- Why might some people not want to help someone who has HIV? [they might think they could get it too, or that their friends will think they have it and keep their distance if they don't understand the facts about HIV and its transmission]

Summing up

Finally, review the list made during the introductory brainstorm about what is HIV, dispelling any myths by

taking the children back to the facts in this lesson plan.

Extension

Explain that there is also another virus, called HPV (Human Papillomavirus) that can be passed on through sexual contact that can lead to certain types of cancer, including one that affects the cervix.

Ask:

- Can anyone remember where the cervix is? (In a woman's body between the vagina and the womb/uterus).

The great news is that everyone is offered a vaccination when they are 12 or 13 years old - in Y8 (Eng) S9 (Sco) that helps protect them against the virus and the cancers.

Ask:

- What is a vaccination? (Vaccinations come in different forms, such as injections or nasal sprays. A vaccine teaches a person's immune system to create antibodies that protect them from diseases. It's much safer for someone's immune system to learn this through vaccination than by catching the diseases and then treating them. Once someone's immune system knows how to fight a disease, it can often protect them for many years.)

For more information, go to [HPV vaccine, from the NHS website, here.](#)

Adapting lessons for learners with additional needs

Our additional [Signposting and Support page](#) provides further guidance on adapting SCARF lessons to meet the needs of learners with additional needs.

Learning Outcomes

Children will be able to:

- Explain how HIV affects the body's immune system;
- Understand that HIV is difficult to transmit;
- Know how a person can protect themselves from HIV.

Key Vocabulary

HIV

infection

immune system

virus

transmission

sharing needles

sexual contact

condom

prejudice

Human immunodeficiency virus

illness

sexual activity

vaginal fluids

semen

medication

lifelong condition

life threatening

sharing of needles

blood transfusions

Human papilloma virus

cancer

vagina

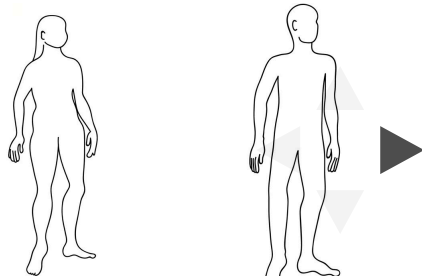
cervix

womb

antibodies

vaccination

Whiteboards



Illnesses and infections

DfE Relationships Education and Health Education statutory requirements

- **Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (Health Education)**
Health and prevention 5. About personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing.

PSHE Association Learning Opportunities

- H9 . That bacteria and viruses can affect health; how everyday hygiene routines can limit the spread of infection; the wider importance of personal hygiene and how to maintain it.
- H10 . How medicines, when used responsibly, contribute to health; that some diseases can be prevented by vaccinations and immunisations; how allergies can be managed.

National Curriculum Links

- Science **Y6** **Animals including humans** (Non-statutory guidance) Pupils should learn how to keep their bodies healthy and how their bodies might be damaged – including how some drugs and other substances can be harmful to the human body.