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| **WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF?**   * Use condoms * Know your sexual partner’s sexual and/or medical history * Get an HIV test at least yearly as part of your routine healthcare, more often if risk factors are present * Do not use drugs or share needles of any kind   **HOW DO I GET TESTED FOR HIV?**   * You can get a FREE HIV test at any of our three CSBMG - Ogeechee (Community Service Board of Middle Georgia) outpatient offices, Monday through Friday 8 am-5 pm. Here at CSBMG, you do not have to be an established client to get tested. Everyone is welcome! * If you have 5 minutes to spare, you can get an HIV test; It’s just that simple! You will be asked a few short questions; the Insti-rapid HIV test will be performed with a simple finger stick; then sixty seconds later, you are given the results. Our knowledgeable and dedicated staff are here for you! We provide HIV education, pre and post HIV counseling, and the test is done in a private and comfortable setting.   **WHAT IF MY RESULTS ARE POSITIVE?**   * The first thing you need to know is that **you are not alone**! Our caring and compassionate clinical team (nurses, physicians, counselors and case managers) is here for you! * We will link you to care with an infectious disease physician to get anti-viral meds started; we will also assess for any other needs or resources that we may assist you with. HIV is totally treatable!!! We are here for you and will follow you through the process. With treatment and practicing healthy lifestyle habits, you can live a long and normal life.   **CSBMG Outpatient Office locations**  Burke County: 292 W. 4th St. Waynesboro, GA 30830  706-437-6863  Emanuel County: 223 N. Anderson Dr. Swainsboro, GA 30401  478-289-2530  Screven County: 302 E. Ogeechee St. Sylvania, GA 30467  912-564-7825   |  | | --- | | hat Don’t be shy! Let them know how great you are. This is the back cover of your booklet, so it’s one of the first and last things the recipient sees.  It’s a great place for your ‘elevator pitch.’ If you only had a few seconds to pitch your products or services to someone, what would you say?   * Consider including a couple of key takeaways on this back cover… * Just remember that this is marketing—if you want to grab their attention, keep it brief, friendly, and readable.  Contact Us If you have a physical location, provide brief directional information, such as highways or landmarks:  223 N. Anderson Dr. Swainsboro, GA 30401  Phone: [Telephone]  Email: [Email address]  Web: [Web address] | | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | CSBMG-OGEECHEE 223 N. Anderson Dr. Swainsboro, GA 30401 | | |  |  | |  | | --- | |  | |  | | Dpes tos | |

**HERE’S THE 411 ON HIV/AIDS!**

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**What do you think when you hear the words HIV/AIDS?**

* ***OMG if I ever got diagnosed, my life would be over!***
* ***It only happens to drug addicts, gay people and prostitutes.***
* ***You only see HIV in big cities, and I live in a small town***
* ***It couldn’t happen to me; I have a good job and drive a nice car.***
* ***I don’t use protection, but I don’t sleep around either, so it couldn’t happen to me!***

***WRONG, WRONG, WRONG!!!***

**Nobody thinks it’ll happen to them!!!**

**BUT HIV DOESN’T CARE!**

* ***Intelligence or socioeconomic status can’t buy you immunity to HIV.***
* ***Your sexuality doesn’t matter to HIV.***
* ***HIV doesn’t discriminate based on your skin color, background, or where you live.***
* ***Any unprotected sex, even with a regular partner, could be a potential risk***

**HIV IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INFECTION!!!**

**WHAT IS HIV/AIDS?**

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). It attacks the body’s immune system and destroys the T-cells, which is a type of white blood cell that the body must have to fight off infection. As the immune system gets weaker, it’s harder and harder for the body to fight off infections and some types of cancer. HIV happens in 3 stages, AIDS being the 3rd and final stage. By the time AIDS hits, the body’s immune system is weakened so severely that it can’t fight off infection. Here’s what happens:

Stage 1 – THE ACUTE INFECTION: Within a few weeks after being infected with HIV, a person may experience flu-like symptoms (headache, body aches, sore throat, swollen glands, rash, fever). These can last a week or two, then go away. This is the body’s natural response to an infection. During this stage, there is a large amount of HIV in the blood and a person is very contagious. There is no way to tell the difference between symptoms caused by the actual flu; or symptoms from HIV infection; you can’t tell if someone has HIV simply by looking at them. Sometimes, people don’t have any symptoms at all.

Stage 2 – CHRONIC HIV INFECTION: After HIV initially attacks your immune system in stage 1, the flu-like symptoms go away. In stage 2, HIV is still active but reproduces at very low levels. Left untreated, HIV is slowly and silently killing your T-cells, and as the number of T-cells diminish, a person is more vulnerable to other infections. Normal number of T-cells in the body is 450-1,400 cells per microliter. The key is not to let this phase go on for too long without treatment. Fortunately, if you start HIV meds in this stage, they will help to rebuild your immune system and can prevent spreading the virus. With meds, your viral load (amount of HIV in your blood at a given time) can get to an undetectable level; when this happens, you can’t transmit the virus to anyone else anymore.

Stage 3 – AIDS: AIDS is the advanced stage of HIV. This is usually when your t-cell count drops below 200. If you didn’t know you were infected with HIV before, you may suspect it when you start to experience some of these symptoms: extreme fatigue, fever that last more than 10 days, night sweats, weight loss, purplish spots on your skin, shortness of breath, long lasting diarrhea, yeast infections in your mouth, throat or vagina, unexplained bruises or bleeding. People with AIDS that don’t take meds only survive 3 years or less most times, but HIV can even be treated at this stage.

It’s possible for a person to carry HIV for a decade or longer before any tell-tale symptoms begin to show. Then again, some people that become infected may develop full blown AIDS in 2 or 3 years. Everyone’s journey is different. That’s why HIV testing and early detection is so important!

Now for the good news!!!

While there is no cure for HIV, it is totally treatable! In the past, an HIV diagnosis was thought of as a death sentence. But not anymore! There have been so many advances in medications and HIV treatment over the years; treating HIV today is like treating many other chronic illnesses. If an infected person takes their antiviral meds as prescribed, receives routine medical care and follow-up blood tests, and practices good lifestyle habits, HIV-positive people can live long and healthy lives.

**HOW DO YOU GET HIV?**

HIV is transmitted through:

* Anal, oral or vaginal sex
* Sharing needles and syringes with someone infected
* Being exposed (fetus or infant) before birth or with breastfeeding
* Through infected blood or blood products

HIV is **NOT** transmitted through:

* Casual touch/kissing, handshake, sharing dishes, drink or food
* From using the toilet after infected person
* Coughing or sneezing
* Pee, poop, spit, vomit, or sweat (as long as no blood is present)