District Health Department #10
Family Planning

HIV/AIDS

What is HIV & AIDS?
HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). HIV breaks down and weakens the body's immune system causing people to become sick with infections that normally would not affect them. AIDS is the last stage of the HIV infection. Both men and women can be infected with HIV & AIDS.

What are the symptoms of HIV & AIDS?
Some people develop symptoms shortly after being infected but on average it takes around 10 years for symptoms to appear. The first symptoms of HIV include swollen lymph glands, slight fever, headache and muscle aches. They may only last for a few weeks. There are several symptoms that appear during the later stages of HIV, they include:

- -thick whitish coating of the tongue or mouth caused by a yeast infection
- -recurring vaginal yeast infections
- -chronic pelvic inflammatory disease
- -periods of extreme fatigue and dizziness
- -rapid weight loss
- -bruising more easily than normal
- -long lasting bouts of diarrhea
- -night sweats and recurring fevers
- -swollen or hardened glands
- -shortness of breath
- -unusual skin rashes or bleeding from skin sores
- -numbness in limbs, loss of muscle control and strength

Is HIV & AIDS treatable?
There are a variety of treatments of medicine "cocktails" as they are called but there is no cure for HIV/AIDS. These treatments are very expensive, have serious side effects and do not work for everyone.

What if I don't get treated?
Some people have lived for several years with HIV/AIDS without treatment. Once HIV is in your body, however, it is continually breaking down your immune system so without treatment it is only a matter of time before your body will no longer be able to fight the disease.

How can I prevent HIV & AIDS?
The only 100% sure way to prevent getting HIV/AIDS is by abstaining from sexual intercourse and from sharing needles. Using a condom consistently and correctly can help protect you from HIV/AIDS. Also avoiding contact with blood and using clean sterile needles for drug injections will decrease your chances of getting HIV/AIDS exposure.

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For more information please visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website, http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/