

## 2 HIV, AIDS and Transmission

### Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)



HIV is a virus that attacks immune cells which help the body combat infections. The immune system helps the body to fight off infections.



Over time, as HIV overpowers the body's **immune system** the body is more likely to get various types of infections and cancers.

### Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

- AIDS is **not a virus**. AIDS is acquired through undiagnosed or untreated HIV.
- AIDS **causes a severe deficiency** of a person's immune system. This increases the risk of specific and opportunistic life-threatening infections and cancers.
- AIDS is the medical term that **describes this group of illnesses and symptoms**. This is why AIDS is considered a "syndrome."

### HIV transmission

- **Cannot be transmitted** through general social contact like kissing, touching, using the same toilet seat or sharing a towel.
- **Cannot be transmitted** in bodily fluids like saliva, sweat, or urine.
- **Can only be transmitted** by 6 bodily fluids: Blood; Semen; Pre-seminal fluids; Rectal fluids; Vaginal fluids; Breast milk.
- **Can only be transmitted** by certain activities: Anal or vaginal sex without a condom; sharing needles and syringes; mother to child during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding; and through direct blood to blood contact.

