AIDS AND DRUG ABUSE

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The two groups at greatest risk for AIDS are homosexual or bisexual men and people who shoot drugs. People who use needles to inject drugs (including mainliners and skin poppers) get the virus by sharing their works with other users who already have the AIDS virus in their blood.

You can't always tell who is infected with the AIDS virus. Most people actually carrying the virus don't look any different than anybody else, they look and feel well, but they can still spread the disease. Symptoms of AIDS may not show up for many years and some remain without symptoms even then. Thousands of IV drug abusers already have AIDS, and many thousands more are carriers of the virus.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a serious condition that affects the body's ability to fight off infection. A diagnosis of AIDS is made when a person develops some form of life-threatening illness not usually found in a person with a normal ability to fight infection. To date more that fifty percent of all the persons with AIDS have died.

Shooting drugs has now been determined to be one of the biggest problems facing America today. While the homosexual community has put on a media campaign alerting and educating the public about the dangers of AIDS, nothing is being done to stop the widespread sharing of needles among drug users.

Remember, if you shoot drugs, you are in danger of catching AIDS. The best advice for protecting yourself and people you love is to stop shooting drugs. It is also important to note that women who shoot drugs or who live with men who shoot drugs sometimes gives AIDS to their babies, either before or shortly after birth. Babies born with AIDS become ill very quickly.

Most individuals infected with the AIDS virus have no symptoms and feel well for a long time before eventually developing such symptoms as fever and night sweats, weight loss, swollen lymph glands in the neck, the underarms and groin area, sever fatigue or tiredness, diarrhea, white spots or unusual blemishes in the mouth. These symptoms are also symptoms of a number of other illnesses and that should be taken into consideration. Anyone with any of these symptoms for more than two weeks should not panic buy should consult their doctor.

The AIDS virus is not spread through normal daily contact at work, school or home. There have been no cases found where the virus has been transmitted by casual contact with AIDS patients in the home, workplace, or health care setting.

There is an antibody test that detects antibodies to the AIDS virus that causes the disease. The body produces antibodies that try to get rid of bacteria, viruses, or anything else that is not supposed to be in the bloodstream. The test may show if someone has been infected with the AIDS virus. While the testing procedure is considered accurate, it does not tell who will develop full-blown AIDS.