


AIDS



WHAT IS THE MEANING OF AIDS?

- **AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**

“AIDS” stands for **Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome**. To understand what that means, let’s break it down:

A – Acquired – AIDS is not something you inherit from your parents. You **acquire** AIDS after birth.

I – Immuno – Your body's immune system includes all the organs and cells that work to fight off infection or disease.

D – Deficiency – You get AIDS when your immune system is "deficient," or isn't working the way it should.

S – Syndrome – A syndrome is a collection of symptoms and signs of disease. AIDS is a syndrome, rather than a single disease, because it is a complex illness with a wide range of complications and symptoms.

AIDS is a medical condition. A person is diagnosed with AIDS when their immune system is too weak to fight off infections.

Since AIDS was first identified in the early 1980s, an unprecedented number of people have been affected by the global AIDS epidemic. Today, there are an estimated 35.3 million people living with HIV and AIDS worldwide.



What are the symptoms of AIDS?

A person is diagnosed with AIDS when they have developed an AIDS related condition or symptom, called an opportunistic infection, or an AIDS related cancer. The infections are called 'opportunistic' because they take advantage of the opportunity offered by a weakened immune system.

It is possible for someone to be diagnosed with AIDS even if they have not developed an opportunistic infection. AIDS can be diagnosed when the number of immune system cells (CD4 cells) in the blood of an HIV positive person drops below a certain level.

Caring for a person with AIDS



In the later stages of AIDS, a person will need palliative care and emotional support. In many parts of the world, friends, family and AIDS organisations provide home based care. This is particularly the case in countries with high HIV prevalence and overstretched healthcare systems. End of life care becomes necessary when a person has reached the very final stages of AIDS. At this stage, preparing for death and open discussion about whether a person is going to die often helps in addressing concerns and ensuring final wishes are followed.

The global AIDS epidemic





Thank you
for
your
attention