

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

Pursuant to KRS214.620(4) we are required to provide written information on the HIV Virus.

### **What is AIDS?**

AIDS is the Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome- A serious illness which make the body unable to fight infection. A person with AIDS is susceptible to certain infections and cancers. When a person with AIDS cannot fight off infections, this person becomes ill. Most people with AIDS will die as a result of their infection.

### **What causes AIDS?**

AIDS is caused by a virus called Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV.

HIV can be spread by:

- Sexual contact (oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse) with an infected person when blood semen or cervical/vaginal secretions are exchanged.
- Sharing a syringe /needle with someone who is infected.
- Receiving contaminated blood or blood products (very unlikely now because blood use for transfusions has been tested for HIV antibodies since March 1985).
- An infected mother passing HIV to her unborn child before or during childbirth, and possible through breast feeding.
- Receipt of transplant of infected tissue organs or artificial insemination from an infected donor.
- A needle stick or sharps injury in a healthcare setting involving an infected person.

### **You cannot get AIDS through casual contact, such as:**

- Sharing food, utensils or plates
- Touching someone who is infected with HIV
- Hugging or shaking hands
- Donating blood ( this has NEVER been a risk for contracting HIV)
- Using public restrooms
- Being bitten by mosquitoes or any insects

### **Treatment:**

Early diagnosis of HIV infection is important! If you have been told you have HIV you should get prompt medical treatment. Your doctor will help you determine the best treatment for you.

### **HIV antibody testing:**

Free anonymous and confidential testing and counseling is available at every health department in Kentucky. After being infected with HIV, it take between two weeks and six months before the test can detect the antibodies to the virus.

### **You should be tested if you:**

- Have had sex with someone who has HIV
- Have shared needles or syringes with someone has HIV
- Have had multiple sex partners or you have had sex with someone who has had multiple partners.
- Have had sex through prostitution (male or female)
- Have had sex with injecting drug users.
- Had a blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985.
- Are you a woman who is pregnant or desires to be pregnant and who wishes to reduce the chance of your baby getting HIV from you should be infected.

**Remember you can't tell whether or not someone has HIV just by looking at them!**

Patient \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Witness \_\_\_\_\_