What is AIDS? What is HIV?
AIDS, the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is a disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV attacks the immune system, weakening it until the infected person can no longer fight off diseases and eventually dies.

Means of transmission

Sexual Transmission: Sex between an infected person and an uninfected person is the most common means of transmission worldwide. Infected blood, semen, and vaginal fluids may transmit HIV to an uninfected person during sex.

Injection Drug Use: When a person uses a syringe to inject drugs, some blood leaks out into the syringe. An uninfected person who uses the same syringe (without first sterilising it thoroughly with bleach) may become infected.

Mother-to-Child Transmission: If a pregnant woman is HIV+, she may transmit HIV to her child before or during birth (through the baby’s exposure to the mother’s infected body fluids) or after birth (through breast feeding).

Blood Transfusion: HIV is present in the blood of an infected person, so any blood that the person donates or sells for medical use can infect someone else.

Distribution of the world’s HIV/AIDS cases

Percent of World’s Population

- 60.7% Asia
- 13.2% Africa
- 12.0% Europe
- 13.6% Americas

Percent of World’s HIV/AIDS Cases

- 69.2% Africa
- 20.4% Asia
- 8.1% Americas
- 2.2% Europe

Note: Oceania represents 0.5% of the world’s population and 0.1% of the world’s HIV/AIDS cases.
The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the world’s women, men, and children*

- Deaths due to AIDS as of 2000 (total 21.8 million)
  - Children 20%
  - Women 41%
  - Men 39%

- People living with HIV/AIDS in 2000 (total 36.1 million)
  - Children 4%
  - Women 45%
  - Men 51%

- People newly infected in 2000 (total 5.3 million)
  - Children 12%
  - Women 41%
  - Men 47%

* aged 15 and younger


Sub-Saharan Africa has felt the greatest impact of HIV/AIDS

- AIDS is the fourth leading cause of death in the world, and the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa.¹

- 25.3 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are currently living with HIV/AIDS.²
  - 12.2 million are women
  - 10.1 million are men
  - 3 million are children (under the age of 15)

- 1 in 10 uninfected women in sub-Saharan Africa becomes infected each year.³


The rate of HIV/AIDS among women is rapidly increasing

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of Women Among HIV-Infected Adults</th>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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Worldwide, women represent an increasingly larger percentage of adults (15 years and older) who are infected with HIV.
