

Active Reading

Section: Disorders of the Immune System

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions that follow.

You can become infected with HIV if you receive HIV-infected white blood cells, which are present in many body fluids. The most common method of HIV transmission is through sexual contact. Because semen, vaginal fluid, and mucous membranes may contain HIV, both males and females can become infected with HIV during any kind of sexual intercourse. Use of a latex condom during sexual contact reduces but does not eliminate the risk of getting or spreading HIV.

HIV can be passed between drug users who share a hypodermic needle because HIV-infected blood often remains in the needle or syringe. Many years ago, many people became infected with HIV after receiving transfusions of HIV-contaminated blood. This is very unlikely now because blood made available for transfusion is tested for HIV. In addition, pregnant or nursing mothers can pass HIV to their infants through breast milk and blood.

HIV is not transmitted through the air, by toilet seats, by kissing or handshaking, or by any other medium where HIV-infected white blood cells could not survive. Although HIV has been found in tears, saliva, and urine, these body fluids usually contain too few HIV particles to cause an infection. Insects such as mosquitoes and ticks do not transmit HIV because they do not carry HIV-infected white blood cells.

SKILL: READING EFFECTIVELY

Read each question, and write your answer in the space provided.

1. What is the most common method of HIV transmission?

2. Why is it possible for either a male or female to become infected with HIV during any kind of sexual intercourse?

3. How can HIV be passed between drug users?

4. Why is it unlikely that a person who receives a blood transfusion today will become infected with HIV?

5. Why isn't HIV transmitted through the air?

In the space provided, write the letter of the term or phrase that best completes the statement.

- _____ 6. HIV cannot be transmitted by
a. handshaking.
b. breast milk.
c. blood transfusions.
d. sexual intercourse.