FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOPIC: AIDS

WORLD AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day is held on the 1st December each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died.

What is HIV/AIDS?
HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus, which is the virus that causes HIV infection. The abbreviation “HIV” can refer to the virus or to HIV infection.

AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection.

HIV attacks and destroys the infection-fighting CD4 cells of the immune system. The loss of CD4 cells makes it difficult for the body to fight infections and certain cancers. Without treatment, HIV can gradually destroy the immune system and advance to AIDS.

How is HIV Spread?
HIV is spread through contact with certain body fluids from a person infected with HIV. These body fluids include:

- Blood
- Semen
- Pre-seminal fluid
- Vaginal fluids
- Rectal fluids
- Breast milk

The spread of HIV from person to person is called HIV transmission. The spread of HIV from an HIV-infected woman to her child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding is called mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

In the United States, HIV is spread mainly by having sex with or sharing drug injection equipment with someone who is infected with HIV. To reduce your risk of HIV infection, use
condoms correctly and consistently during sex, limit your number of sexual partners, and never share drug injection equipment.

Mother-to-child transmission is the most common way that children become infected with HIV. HIV medicines, given to HIV-infected women during pregnancy and childbirth and to their babies after birth, reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

You can’t get HIV by shaking hands or hugging a person infected with HIV. You also can’t get HIV from contact with objects such as dishes, toilet seats, or doorknobs used by a person with HIV. HIV does not spread through the air or through mosquito, tick, or other insect bites.

What is the Treatment for HIV?
The use of HIV medicines to treat HIV infection is called antiretroviral therapy (ART). ART involves taking a combination of HIV medicines (called an HIV regimen) every day. (HIV medicines are often called antiretrovirals or ARVs.)

ART can’t cure HIV, but it can help people infected with HIV live longer, healthier lives. ART also reduces the risk of HIV transmission.

Without treatment, HIV can advance to AIDS. The time it takes for HIV to advance to AIDS varies, but it can take 10 years or more.

**HIV transmission is possible at any stage of HIV infection—even if an HIV-infected person has no symptoms of HIV.**

On a separate note, it is important to point out that Kentucky is one of the unhealthiest states in our nation; but, a few healthy lifestyle choices could change this. First, eating normally proportioned helpings of nutritious foods including at least five fruits and vegetables a day can lower weight and reduce heart disease and diabetes. Second, exercising about 30 minutes per day can lower blood pressure. Third, avoiding the use of tobacco products can reduce several types of cancer. Finally, making sure you get your needed preventive screenings can detect diseases early and greatly increase your chances for a positive health outcomes, while receiving your recommended vaccinations can prevent acquiring disease in the first place. Visit our website at www.LCDHD.org and click the “52 Weeks to Health” banner to learn more about each of these areas.

Source: aidsinfo.nih.gov and worldaidsday.org