

5th Grade Disease Prevention

PARENT GUIDE

**Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases
HIV and AIDS Introduction**



**Office of Elementary Health and Physical Education
James Hitchner, Curriculum Specialist
191 South East Street
Frederick, MD 21701
(301) 644-5161
james.hitchner@fcps.org**

HIV and AIDS is one of the most serious health problems ever faced by the American public. Education is one of the most effective ways of fighting the disease.

The Maryland State Board of Education directs each local school system to provide a comprehensive Health Education Instructional Program for students in grades K-12. Part of this program is HIV and AIDS Prevention Education. Students are to receive HIV and AIDS instruction at the elementary, middle, and high school level. In Frederick County, the first unit of instruction takes place in Grade 5. Parents will be provided the opportunity to review all instructional materials and information used during the unit prior to its delivery to students. Teachers and School Nurses must receive instruction in how to deliver the Disease Prevention unit.

Students may be excused from the instructional unit on Disease Prevention if the parent or guardian indicates that they DO NOT give permission on the Parent Permission slip prior to instruction. When/if this occurs, the student will be provided an alternate assignment in another health-related area.

The purpose of the Fifth Grade Disease Prevention unit is to provide students with factual, age appropriate information to help them develop the understandings and responsible behaviors that can prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS.

The objectives of the unit are:

- Differentiate between communicable and non-communicable diseases
- Identify disease producing agents (bacteria, protozoa, virus, fungi)
- Identify the modes of transmission for disease (air, touch, food, body fluids)
- Explain how the body fights infection
- Explain how the immune system responds to disease
- Analyze personal daily living habits and choices that increase the risk of developing disease
- List behaviors that increase the risk of developing disease
- Identify and categorize personal habits into High and Low risk behaviors
- Explain HIV and AIDS as a communicable disease
- Describe the modes of transmission for HIV and clarify ways HIV can not be transmitted.
(Sexual transmission of HIV and AIDS is not part of classroom discussion, although it is stated in the video as one form of transmission of the disease. If questions arise, students are encouraged to share these at home.)
- Identify some behaviors that increase the risk of contracting HIV
- Identify ways to prevent the transmission of HIV
- Analyze the effects of disease on the individual, family, and society

The unit includes a sixteen-minute video, "HIV and AIDS: Staying Safe". The video covers the science of HIV and AIDS in an engaging animation that explains what happens to the immune system when HIV invades the body. Methods of transmission and common misconceptions for methods of transmission are included in an age-appropriate fashion and help students understand risky behaviors. Emphasis is placed on the importance of taking responsibility for one's health and for the choices one makes.

A Parent Guide, "Conversation Starters for Parents About Disease Prevention" has been developed in order to facilitate discussion should you wish to do so at home. You may receive a copy from your student's teacher, or you may access this document online at <http://education.fcps.org/healthpek12> (select "Parent Resources" from the top menu bar, from the drop-down menu select "Health", and scroll down to the section labeled "Fifth Grade Disease Prevention Unit").

Conversation Starters for Parents about Disease Prevention

When your student returns home after receiving instruction in the Fifth Grade Disease Prevention Unit, you can help to clarify understanding by talking about what he/she learned. Use the questions below to help start a conversation or generate questions yourself.

Questions after Lesson #1:

- The Disease Prevention unit teaches about communicable and non-communicable disease. What is the difference between them? (*Communicable disease is a contagious disease that can be spread from person to person. A non-communicable disease cannot be spread from person to person.*)
- What causes communicable disease? (*Communicable disease is caused by virus, bacteria, fungi or protozoa.*)
- How do communicable diseases spread? (*Diseases spread through the air, by touch, on contaminated food or water, in infected body fluids*)
- What do you think is the best way to keep yourself safe from infectious disease? (*During the lesson students created a list of different ways to keep themselves safe from disease. Ask your student what he/she remembers from this list. Example: wash hands*)

Questions after Lesson #2:

- I think the body fights off infection through the immune system. How does that work? *Blood is part of the immune system. Blood contains both red and white blood cells. There is about one big white cell for every 500 or so small red cells. The big white cells defend the body against disease by attacking and killing the germs and viruses. Most of the time the big white blood cells are able to stop the germs and viruses and the body flushes the dead germs and viruses out of the bloodstream. (Liver or spleen- two organs in your body.) The video used during the lesson provides a pictorial story that helps the student understand the concept.*
- Living with a disease that can't be cured must be really hard. How do you think it would change your life? (*Many answers would be appropriate here.*)
- I remember you learned about disease prevention and HIV and AIDS today. What can you tell me about what you learned? (*Answers will vary. Look for the following answers: the difference between communicable and non-communicable disease, how disease is spread, and how to keep from getting or spreading a communicable disease.*)
- Do you have any questions about what you have learned during the Disease Prevention Unit?
- Would you share the worksheets you did in school with me?

Common Questions Kids Ask About HIV and AIDS

Are doctors, nurses, and other health-care workers at great risk of getting the HIV virus by being around AIDS patients?

NO. So far, no one has been identified with the HIV virus just by taking care of an AIDS patient. However, a few health-care workers have gotten the virus after accidentally coming into contact with an AIDS patient's blood through needle injuries.

How can I tell if someone I know has been exposed to the HIV virus?

You can't. There is no way to just look at a person and know if he or she has been infected with HIV. If you are not sharing intravenous drug needles or sharing personal products that may have blood on them, you don't have to worry.

Can I get HIV if I use a dish, glass, or silverware used by a person who has the HIV virus?

NO.

Can I get HIV from a mosquito bite?

NO.

Can I get AIDS if I am in a crowded place with someone who has the HIV virus?

NO.

Can I get HIV from the tears or the sweat of a person who has AIDS?

NO.

Can I be infected with the HIV virus if I have my ears pierced or if I get a tattoo using the same needle used by someone who has the HIV virus?

YES. The needle may contain traces of the infected person's blood which may be passed on to you.

Can I get the HIV virus by eating dinner with someone who has the virus?

NO.

Can I get HIV if I hug an AIDS patient?

NO.

How can I keep from getting the HIV virus?

The best way is for you to practice safe behaviors. Do not share any personal items that may have blood on them and don't touch anyone else's blood.