



December 1st is World Aids Day, which is why you'll see people wearing red ribbons, even on X Factor and Strictly Come Dancing. On World Aids Day lovely, thoughtful and cool people wear red ribbons to show that they care, to help promote safer sex, to encourage people to look after themselves and each other and to reduce stigma. More on stigma later but for now the facts.



We can have HIV for ages without knowing. It usually does not have any recognisable symptoms. In the UK it's estimated that over 22,000 people have got it without knowing about it (1/4 of the total number in the UK).

So if you've ever had sex without a condom you might want to get a check-up.

For your nearest clinic visit condomessentialwear.co.uk/gum-clinic

The test involves either a blood sample (taken with a needle from the arm or a pin prick to the end of your finger) or a swab from the inside of your mouth. The highly trained health care professionals will tell you what is happening.

Tests are free and confidential in the UK.

As it is one of the least common infections you may also want to get a check-up for everything else too (such as Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea, which are very common, but less dangerous).



HIV is a virus which attacks and destroys CD4 cells in the body, which are the cells which help to fight illnesses. Unless someone with HIV gets treatment, the number of CD4 cells can become so low that they can no longer fight off illnesses, such as pneumonia, and this can threaten their life (this is often known as having 'AIDS').

There is no cure for HIV.

But since 1990s there have been drug treatments which can help people living with HIV to stay well and live relatively normal lives. They can have sex, have kids, have careers, have fun, have a dance, drive around in their cars playing really loud music, nip out to the shop for a Double Decker and a can of Coke, that kind of thing.

But living with HIV is not easy and can shorten life expectancy, so we should try to avoid it.



People who live with HIV are often bullied and abused because of their illness. It's simply wrong to treat people badly because they have HIV. Do we go around calling people with cancer or diabetes names? No.

Anyone can get HIV. Anyone. Straight/Gay, Black/White, Man/Woman, ManU fan/Chelsea fan, Rockstar/Rapper, Sex Worker/Sexual Health Worker. There is no type of person that gets HIV. If we have unprotected sex, we are at risk of getting HIV

So this is why we wear red ribbons at the beginning of December - to show that we care.

For more about safer sex, condoms, STIs and services as well as info and advice about body parts, relationships, porn, feeling good, doing it, not doing it and doing 'stuff' visit:

bishUK.com



©Justin Hancock, 2011 Bish Training



The main way that people in the UK get HIV is by someone having sex with someone, with HIV, without a condom: specifically penis in vagina or anus (arse) sex.

This is why we either need to get tested for HIV or use a condom or have non penetrative sex.

It's also possible to get HIV from sharing needles with someone who has HIV. It's also possible to be born with HIV from a parent who already has it.

We can not get HIV from kissing, stroking, licking, massaging, rubbing or using the same toilet seat or towel or anything like that. OK? Got that?