

A

Abdomen: The part of the body that contains the stomach, intestines, liver, reproductive organs, and other organs.

Abortion: Surgical procedure that ends a pregnancy. Early abortion is a procedure that is done between six to fourteen weeks after last period.

Absolute CD4+ Cell Count (T4 count): The number of T helper cells (lymphocytes) in a cubic millimeter of blood. Normal range for adults is 800-1200. The CD4+ cell count is significantly lower in people whose immune system has been affected by HIV.

Abstinence: Refraining from something, e.g., sexual activity and illicit drugs.

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS): The late stage of the illness triggered by infection with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). According to the official definition published by the CDC, a person receives an AIDS diagnosis when he or she has a CD4 (helper T-cell) count of less than 200 and/or certain opportunistic infections common with advanced immune deficiency.

Active Immunity: Immunity produced by the body in response to stimulation by a disease-causing organism or other antigen, as in a vaccine.

Acute: Refers to intense, rapid onset, short-term symptoms. Not chronic or long lasting.

Adverse Reaction: Any undesirable effect of a medication.

Agent: An organism responsible for the initiation of the disease process.

AIDS: see Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG): A network of medical centers around the country in which federally-funded clinical trials are conducted to test the safety and effectiveness of experimental treatments for AIDS and HIV infection. ACTG studies are sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

AIDS Dementia Complex (ADC): A frequent cerebral condition in people with AIDS that results in the loss of cognitive capacity, affecting the ability to function in a social or occupational setting. Its cause has not been determined exactly, but may result from HIV infection of cells in the brain or an inflammatory reaction to such infection.

Alopecia: Hair loss.

Alternative Medicine: A catch-all phrase for a long list of treatments or medicinal systems including traditional systems such as Chinese or Ayurvedic medicine, homeopathy, various herbals and other miscellaneous treatments that have not been accepted by the mainstream, or Western, medical establishment. Alternative medicine is also referred to as complementary medicine (see). The designation "alternative medicine" is not equivalent to "holistic medicine," which is a more narrow term. See Holistic Medicine.

Amino Acid: Any one of 20 or more organic acids that are the building blocks of proteins, necessary for metabolism and growth.

Amniocentesis: A procedure in which a hollow needle is inserted into the uterus of a pregnant female to obtain amniotic fluid.

Anabolic Steroids: Muscle or weight-building steroids.

Anal Sex: A form of sexual intercourse in which the penis is inserted into the partner's anus/rectum. Also known as rectal sex.

Analgesic: Refers to a compound that reduces pain.

Anaphylactic Shock: A life-threatening allergic reaction characterized by a swelling of body tissues (including the throat) and a sudden decline in blood pressure.

Androgynous: Having a number of attributes that can be characterized as "masculine" as well as a number of attributes that can be characterized as "feminine." Such individuals may identify as both male and female, or as neither.

Anemia: When blood is deficient in red blood cells or hemoglobin.

Anesthesia: Loss of feeling or awareness. A local anesthetic causes loss of feeling in a part of the body. A general anesthetic puts the person to sleep.

Anorexia: Lack or complete loss of appetite for food.

Antibiotic: A chemical substance that kills bacteria or inhibits its growth; antibiotics are used to treat infectious diseases.

Antibody: A disease-fighting protein in the blood created by the immune system, also known as immunoglobulin. Antibodies coat, mark for immune destruction or render harmless foreign particles like bacteria, viruses or harmful toxins. Antibodies also tag infected cells, making them vulnerable to attack by the immune system. Each antibody attaches itself to a single specific chemical sequence on an antigen. Elements of the body's immune response, these substances circulate in the blood and in other bodily fluids to fight disease-causing microbes.

Antigen: A foreign substance, usually protein, such as a fragment of a virus or bacteria, that stimulates an immune response, such as the production of antibodies. An antigen contains several subunits called epitopes that are targets of specific antibodies and cytotoxic T-lymphocytes.

Antioxidant: A substance that inhibits oxidation or reactions promoted by oxygen or peroxides. Antioxidant nutrients are thought to protect human cells from damage.

Antiretroviral: A substance that stops or suppresses the activity of a retrovirus such as HIV. AZT, ddC, ddI and d4T are examples of antiretroviral drugs.

Antiviral: A substance or process that destroys a virus or suppresses its replication.

Anus: External opening of the rectum.

Arrhythmia: Abnormal heart rhythm.

Asymptomatic: Without symptoms; infected but not demonstrating signs or symptoms of a disease.

Asymptomatic Transmission of Herpes: The spread of virus from one person to another during a period of asymptomatic shedding, i.e., the body sheds virus even though herpes blisters are not present.

Atrophy: A wasting or shrinking of cells, tissue, organs or muscle.

Attenuated Virus: A weakened virus with reduced ability to infect or produce disease. Some vaccines are based on attenuated viruses.

Atypical: Irregular; not typical.

Autoimmunization: Immunization produced by an attack of the disease.

Autoinoculate: A secondary infection originating from a site at which infection is already present in the body.

Autoinoculation of Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV): The spread of HSV from one part of the body to another. This can result when a person with active herpes deposits a significant amount of virus onto some other vulnerable part of the body – most often a mucous membrane (eg. eye).

Autologous: Pertaining to the same organism or one of its parts; originating with the organism itself.

B

Bacteria: Single-celled microorganisms, some of which are capable of causing disease.

Bacterial STDs: Such as syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia respond effectively to antibiotic treatment, yet may remain epidemic in the population.

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV): An infection caused by an overgrowth of various bacteria which are normally found in the vagina. The most prevalent cause of vaginal symptoms among women of childbearing age, BV is characterized by a strong fishy odor and a gray, watery discharge. It is a minor infection which is treated with antibiotics. Also called gardnerella.

Bactericidal: Capable of killing bacteria.

Bacteriostatic: Capable of inhibiting reproduction of bacteria.

Bacterium: A microscopic organism composed of a single cell. Many bacteria can cause disease in humans.

Balanitis: Inflammation of the head of the penis.

Bartholin's Glands: Two secreting glands found at each side of the vaginal entrance.

Baseline Characteristics: A variable that is measured, observed, or assessed in a patient at the beginning of a trial, prior to the initiation of treatment.

B-Cell: A type of white blood cell involved in the production of antibodies.

B-Cell Lymphoma: A malignancy of the B lymphocytes.

bdNA (branched DNA assay): A test used for measuring the number of HIV fragments in the blood of people with HIV. The test quantifies HIV-RNA using a methodology that differs from polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

Benign: Not cancerous; does not invade nearby tissue or spread to other parts of the body.

Bimanual Examination: An examination of the female reproductive organs, performed by placing the fingers of one hand inside the vagina and using the other hand to press down on the abdomen to feel and move the individual organs between the two hands.

Biologic: A biological product used in the prevention or treatment of disease.

Biological Response Modifiers (BRMs): Substances, either natural or synthesized, that boost, direct, or restore normal immune defenses. BRMs include interferons, interleukins, thymic hormones and monoclonal antibodies.

Biological Therapy: Treatment to stimulate or restore the ability of the immune system to fight infection and disease. Also called immunotherapy.

Biopsy: Removal of tissue from the innermost layer of the body examination or diagnosis.

Bisexual: A person who has sexual relations with persons of both sexes.

Bladder: The hollow organ that stores urine.

Blood-brain Barrier: The barrier between brain blood vessels and brain tissues whose effect is to restrict what may pass from the blood into the brain.

Body Fluids: Term used for a number of fluids manufactured within the body. Usually used when referring to semen, blood, urine, and saliva.

Bone Marrow: Soft tissue located in the cavities of the bones where blood cells are formed, including erythrocytes, leukocytes, and platelets.

Bronchi: The hollow branches in the lungs that connect the trachea to the alveoli.

Bubo: The inflammatory swelling of a lymph node, particularly in the groin.

C

Cachexia: General weight loss and wasting.

Cancer: A term for diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control. Cancer cells can invade nearby tissues and can spread through the bloodstream and lymphatic system to other parts of the body.

Candida: A group of yeast-like fungi, in particular *Candida albicans*, that infect the mouth as well as other mucous membranes in the esophagus, intestines, vagina, throat and lungs. Oral or recurrent vaginal candida infection is an early sign of immune system deterioration.

Candidiasis: An infection due to candida yeast. The symptoms of oral candidiasis (thrush) and vaginal candidiasis (formerly called monilia) include pain, itching, redness and white patches in their respective sites. Some common treatments are clotrimazole, nystatin and miconazole.

Carcinogen: Any cancer-producing substance.

Carcinoma: Cancer that begins in the lining or covering of an organ.

Carcinoma in Situ: Cancer that involves only the cells in which it began and that has not spread to other tissues.

Cardiomyopathy: A degenerative condition of the heart muscle, cardiomyopathy may be caused by HIV, other viruses, or by some drugs.

Carrier: A person without symptoms who can transmit a disease to others by carrying the pathogens in his body.

Case Management: The process of systematically organizing and implementing specific disease intervention activities.

Case-control Study: A study that involves the identification of persons with the disease or condition of interest (cases) and an otherwise comparable group of persons without the disease or condition of interest (controls). Cases and controls are then compared with respect to some current or past attribute or exposure that may be causally related to the disease or condition.

Casual Contact: Normal day-to-day contact between people, e.g., shaking hands.

Casual Transmission: Some diseases are transmitted through casual contact, like colds and flu. (HIV/AIDS is not transmitted through casual contact.)

CDC: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A federal agency that studies, monitors, and provides information on the nation's health and safety.

CD4: The protein structure on the surface of a human cell that allows HIV to attach, enter, and thus infect a cell. CD4 receptors are present on CD4 cells (helper T-cells), macrophages and dendritic cells, among others. Normally, CD4 acts as an accessory molecule, forming part of larger structures (such as the T-cell receptor) through which T-cells and other cells signal each other.

CD4 Cell: A type of T-cell involved in protecting against viral, fungal and protozoal infections. The CD4 cell modulates the immune response to an infection through a complex series of interactions with antigen presenting cells (macrophages, dendritic cells and B cells) and other types of lymphocytes (B-cells and CD8 cells). Other names for CD4 cell are T-helper cell or helper T-cell.

CD4 Cell Count: The most commonly used surrogate marker for assessing the state of the immune system. As CD4 cell count declines, the risk of developing opportunistic infections increases. The normal range for CD4 cell counts is 500 to 1500 per cubic millimeter of blood. CD4 count should be rechecked at least every six to twelve months if CD4s are greater than 500/mm³. If the count is lower, testing every three months is advised.

CD8: (T8) A protein embedded in the cell surface of suppressor and killer T-lymphocytes.

Cell: A very small unit of an organism. It contains a nucleus and cytoplasm, and is surrounded by a membrane.

Cell Culture: A diagnostic test for many kinds of viruses. In a cell culture for HSV, a swab of the patient's herpes lesion is placed in a dish containing normal skin cells to see if HSV will grow.

Cellular Immune Response: The portion of the body's immune response that involves T-lymphocytes or other cells designed to fight an "antigen" or invading microbe.

Cellular Immunity: The branch of the immune system that relies primarily upon specific defense cells rather than antibodies.

Central Nervous System (CNS): Composed of the brain, spinal cord, and its coverings (meninges).

Cerebral: Pertaining to the cerebrum, which is the main portion of the brain.

Cervical Dysplasia: An abnormal tissue growth on the cervix which may progress to cancer if not treated in time. Cervical dysplasia is detected through a Pap Smear.

Cervicitis: An inflammation of the cervix. It is often caused by an infection, or by irritating chemicals in vaginal hygiene products. Symptoms may include unusual discharge, or bleeding with intercourse, or there may be no symptoms. If the infection moves up into the uterus, it can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).

Cervix: The lower, cylindrical end of the uterus the forms a narrow canal connecting the upper (uterus) and lower (vagina) parts of a women's reproductive tract.

Cesarean Birth: Delivery of a baby through surgical incision of the abdominal and uterine walls.

Chain of Infection: A series of infections that are directly or immediately connected to a particular source.

Chancre: A painless sore caused by the syphilis spirochete. It is the first sign of syphilis, and appears at the site where the spirochete entered the body.

Chancroid: A highly contagious sexually transmitted disease caused by the *Hemophilus ducreyi* bacterium. It appears as a pimple, chancre, sore or ulcer on the skin of the genitals. The lesion appears after an incubation period of three to five days and may facilitate the transmission of HIV.

Chemoprophylaxis: Prevention of disease by chemical means.

Chemotherapy: The treatment of disease by chemical agents; usually refers to cancer treatment.

Chlamydia/Trachomatis: The most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S. It is a bacteria which can infect mucus membranes in the penis, vagina, cervix, anus, urethra, or eye. There are usually no symptoms, but when women have them, they include bleeding between periods, or vaginal discharge. Symptoms in men include pus or milky discharge from the penis, and pain or burning upon urination. The causative organism of lymphogranuloma venereum, chlamydial urethritis, and most cases of newborn conjunctivitis.

Chronic: Refers to symptoms and diseases that last for an extended period of time without noticeable change.

Clap: A slang expression for gonorrhea or chlamydia.

Clinical: Refers to physical signs and symptoms directly observable in the human body.

Clinical Trial: A study done to test an experimental medicine in human beings to see if it is safe and effective.

Clitoris: The small structure located just above the urinary opening in a female.

CMRNG: Chromosomally-mediated resistant *Neisseria gonorrhoea*. A type of gonorrhoea that is resistant to treatment with penicillin, but does not produce penicillinase, which differentiates it from PPNG.

CMV (Cytomegalovirus): A herpes infection that causes serious illness in people with AIDS. CMV can develop in any part of the body but most often appears in the retina of the eye, the nervous system, the colon or the esophagus.

Co-factors: Substances, microorganisms, or characteristics of individuals that may influence the progression of a disease or the likelihood of becoming ill.

Cohort: In epidemiology, a group of individuals with some characteristic in common.

Coitus: Intercourse.

Cold Sores: Otherwise known as “fever blisters.” Can be caused by herpes type-1 or 2 infection.

Colitis: Inflammation of the colon.

Colon: A division of the intestine where solid waste is compacted into feces, extending from the cecum to the rectum; also called the large intestine.

Colorectal: Relating to the colon and rectum, or to the entire large bowel (large intestine).

Colposcopy: An examination of the cervix and vagina with a low power microscope. The purpose of this exam is to determine if there is abnormal cell tissue that may have been detected by a pap smear. The clinician may choose to do a biopsy, which is the removal of a small piece of tissue from the cervix for closer examination.

Communicable: Capable of spreading from one diseased person or animal to another person or animal, either directly or indirectly.

Communicable Disease: A disease that can be transmitted from person to person.

Community-Based Clinical Trial (CBCT): A clinical trial conducted primarily by primary-care physicians, rather than academic research facilities.

Compassionate Use: A method of providing experimental drugs to very sick patients who have no other treatment options. Often, case-by-case approval must be obtained from the FDA for “compassionate use” of a drug.

Complement: A group of proteins in normal blood serum and plasma that, in combination with antibodies, causes the destruction of antigens (particularly bacteria and foreign blood corpuscles).

Complementary Medicine: Nonmainstream health care provided in addition or instead of standard medical practice. See also Alternative Medicine.

Concomitant Drugs: Drugs that are taken together. Certain concomitant medications have adverse interactions.

Condom: A cover for the penis, worn during sex to prevent STDs and pregnancy. There is now a “female condom” that lines the vagina, which is worn by the woman during sex for similar protection. Condoms made of latex are effective at preventing some STDs and pregnancy if used consistently and correctly.

Condyloma: Another name for HPV or genital warts. They are caused by a virus and are infectious. Symptoms may not appear for one month to several years after becoming infected. Small pink warty growths may appear in or around the genitals. Often there is itching, burning, or mild pain. Although the virus cannot be cured, treatment is available.

Condyloma Latum: Skin condition of secondary syphilis; wart-like growths in warm, dark, moist areas (mucous membranes) of body; highly infectious.

Congenital: Being present at birth but not necessarily hereditary. Syphilis can be transmitted to the fetus after the 18th week of pregnancy. Early treatment of mother can prevent infection of the fetus.

Conization: Surgery to remove a cone-shaped piece of tissue from the cervix and cervical canal. Conization may be used to diagnose or treat a cervical condition. Also called cone biopsy.

Conjunctivitis: Inflammation of the conjunctiva, the membrane lining the eyelids and sclera of the eyeball. May be caused by infection with chlamydia or gonorrhoea.

Contact: A person exposed to an infectious patient. This individual may or may not become infected.

Contagious: Capable of being transmitted by casual contact from person to person.

Contraceptive: Methods used to prevent pregnancy.

Contraindication (“to indicate against”): A specific circumstance when the use of certain treatments could be harmful.

Copulation: Act of engaging in sexual intercourse.

Cowper’s Glands: Tubular glands that secrete into the male urethra.

Cross-Dresser: Someone who wears clothing typically associated with the sex opposite from that to which he or she was assigned. Cross-dressers can be male or female and can be heterosexual, homosexual, asexual, or bisexual.

Cryotherapy: A treatment in which the cervix is touched by an instrument that rapidly freezes the tissue. It is one of the treatments for abnormal cell tissue on the cervix.

Cryptosporidiosis: An opportunistic infection of the intestines caused by a protozoan parasite (*Cryptosporidium parvum*).

Culture: The process of growing bacteria or other microorganisms in the laboratory, often for use in diagnostic studies.

Cunnilingus: Using mouth or tongue to stimulate female genitalia.

Cutaneous: Of, pertaining to, or affecting the skin.

Cyst: A sac or capsule filled with fluid.

Cystoscopy: A procedure in which the doctor inserts a lighted instrument into the urethra (the tube leading from the bladder to the outside of the body) to look at the bladder.

Cytomegalovirus (CMV): A herpes virus that is a common cause of opportunistic diseases in people with AIDS and other people with immune suppression. While CMV can infect most organs of the body, people with AIDS are most susceptible to CMV retinitis and colitis.

D

Dementia: A loss of mental capacity resulting from the progressive destruction of brain cells.

Dermatitis: Inflammation of the skin.

DGI: Disseminated gonococcal infection; the systemic spread of gonorrhea through the circulatory system throughout the body.

Diagnosis: The determination of the presence of a specific disease or infection, usually accomplished by evaluating clinical symptoms and laboratory tests.

Diarrhea: Abnormally high frequency and liquidity of fecal discharges.

Dilator: A device used to stretch or enlarge an opening.

DIS: Disease Intervention Specialist; a person who performs STD patient interviews and field investigations.

Disease: A condition in the body causing characteristic symptoms.

Disease Intervention: Refers to that phase of STD control which employs techniques such as contact interviewing and investigation, blood testing, and education for the purpose of locating and bringing to treatment untreated cases of STDs.

Disseminated Gonococcal Infection (DGI): Gonorrhea which has spread to the bloodstream and disseminates throughout the body. Can infect the joints and heart and can cause meningitis.

Disseminated: Spread throughout the body.

DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid): A double-stranded molecule that makes up the chromosomes in the center of a cell and carries genetic information in the form of genes.

Dormancy: See latency.

Douching: Using water or a medicated solution to clean the vagina and cervix.

Dysmenorrhea: Painful menstruation.

Dyspareunia: The medical term for painful sex.

Dysplasia: The abnormal development of tissue. In disease, the alteration of size, shape, and organization of adult cells.

Dysuria: Difficult or painful urination. Dysuria may be due to a STD.

E

Ectopic Pregnancy: The implantation of a fertilized ovum (egg) outside the uterus (the normal place for implantation) e.g. fallopian tube. Can occur when gonorrhea or chlamydia has scarred the fallopian tubes; an extremely serious condition.

Edema: Swelling due to increased extracellular water.

Efficacy: Strength, effectiveness. The ability of a drug to control or cure an illness. Efficacy should be distinguished from activity, which is limited to a drug's immediate effects on the microbe triggering the disease.

Ejaculation: Discharge of semen.

ELISA (Enzyme-Linked ImmunoSorbent Assay): A diagnostic test utilizing an enzyme-labeled immunoreactant (antigen or antibody) and an immunosorbent (antigen or antibody bound to a solid support). The most common test used to detect the presence of HIV antibodies in the blood, which are indicative of ongoing HIV infection. One type of ELISA is the preliminary test for HIV antibodies (to detect HIV infection). A positive ELISA test result must be confirmed by another test called a Western Blot.

Encephalitis: A brain inflammation of viral or other microbial origin. Symptoms include headaches, neck pain, fever, nausea, vomiting and nervous system problems. Several types of opportunistic infections can cause encephalitis.

Endemic: Common to a specific population or region.

Endocervical: Pertaining to the interior of the cervix, especially the endocervical canal.

Endocrine: Relating to the internal secretion of hormones into systemic circulation.

Endogenous: Relating to or produced by the body.

Endometrium: The mucous membrane that lines the uterus.

Endoscopy: Viewing the inside of a body cavity with a device using flexible fiber optics.

Enzyme: A cellular protein whose shape allows it to hold together several other molecules in close proximity to each other. Enzymes in this way are able to induce chemical reactions in other substances with little expenditure of energy and without being changed itself.

Epidemic: An outbreak of a contagious disease affecting a large population.

Epidemiology: The branch of medical science that studies the incidence, distribution and control of disease in a population.

Epididymis: The elongated, cord-like structure along the posterior border of the testes, in the ducts of which the spermatozoa are stored.

Epididymitis: The inflammation of the epididymis.

Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV): A member of the herpesvirus family that causes one of two kinds of mononucleosis (the other is caused by CMV). It infects the nose and throat and is contagious. It lies dormant in the lymph glands and has been associated with Burkitt's lymphoma (see) and oral hairy leukoplakia (see).

Erythematous: Red or reddened.

Erythrocytes: Red blood cells. The primary function of erythrocytes is to carry oxygen to cells.

Etiology: The study or theory of factors that cause disease.

Exposure: Not protected, i.e. coming in contact with a disease-producing agent. Not all exposures lead to infection.

Exudate: Material which collects as a result of inflammation. It may contain large numbers of white blood cells. A pus-like discharge is a form of exudate.

F

Fallopian Tubes: Tubes on each side of the uterus through which an egg moves from the ovaries to the uterus.

False Negative: A negative result for an HIV blood test when, in fact, the person has the infection.

False Positive: A positive result when, in fact, the person does not have the infection.

Fellatio: Using the mouth or tongue to stimulate the penis.

Fetus: The unborn offspring developing in the uterus.

Fomite: An object, such as a towel, bicycle seat, or an article of clothing, that is not in itself harmful, but is able to harbor pathogenic microorganisms and thus may serve as an agent of transmission for an infection. Many people think fomites can spread STDs, but there are very few documented cases of fomite transmission of any STD.

Foreskin: Fold of skin that, in uncircumcised men, covers the glans penis.

FTM: A female-to-male transgendered person who may or may not be a pre-operative, post-operative, or non-operative transsexual.

Fungicidal: A substance that kills a fungus.

Fungus: A general term used to denote a class of microbes including mushrooms, yeasts, and molds.

G

Gay: Person whose primary sexual attraction is toward members of the same sex; homosexual..

Gene: A unit of DNA that carries information for the biosynthesis of a specific product.

Genital: Pertaining to external sex organs.

Genital Ulcer Disease (GUD): Ulcerative lesions on the genitals, usually caused by a sexually transmitted condition such as herpes, syphilis or chancroid. The presence of genital ulcers may increase the risk of transmitting HIV.

Genital Warts: See HPV (Human Papillomavirus).

Genitalia: The reproductive organs.

Genito-Urinary: Pertaining to the generative (sex) and urinary organs. Sometimes called the G.U. tract or system.

Genome: One set of chromosomes containing the complete genetic makeup of an organism.

Germs: Microorganisms that cause infection and disease, e.g., bacteria, viruses, protozoa.

Gonococcus: Name for the bacterium that causes gonorrhea.

Gonorrhea: A sexually transmitted infection caused by bacteria and may infect the vagina, urethra, cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes, rectum, abdominal cavity, penis, testicles, throat and eyes. Symptoms include discharge from genitals, pain and burning with urination. If it spreads to the uterus, fallopian tubes and abdominal cavity, it may cause abdominal pain, fever, and painful intercourse.

Groin: The lowest part of the abdomen, at its junction with the thigh.

Growth Hormone: A pituitary hormone that regulates growth. Human growth hormone is being used experimentally in wasting syndromes associated with cancer, burns, and HIV.

Growth Factor: A substance that promotes the growth of specific cells.

Gumma: Lesion seen in a late syphilis.

Gynecologic Oncologists: Doctors who specialize in treating cancers of the female reproductive organs.

Gynecology: The branch of medicine that involves care of the female reproductive system and breasts.

H

Helper T Cells (T4, CD4): A subset of T cells that carry the CD4 receptor that are essential for activating antibody production, cytotoxic T cells, and other immune responses.

Hematologic: Pertaining to, or involving the blood, or its constituent cells.

Hematotoxic: Poisonous to the blood or bone marrow.

Hemoglobin: The component of red blood cells that carries oxygen.

Hemolysis: The rupture of red blood cells.

Hemophilia: An inherited disease that prevents the normal clotting of blood.

Hepatic: Pertaining to the liver.

Hepatitis: Inflammation of the liver caused by microbes or chemicals. Often accompanied by jaundice, enlarged liver, fever, fatigue and nausea and high levels of liver enzymes in the blood.

Hepatitis A: A virus transmitted by the fecal/oral route. In other words, a person is infected with the virus by ingesting anything that is contaminated by infected feces. Hepatitis A rarely causes long-term problems and is preventable by vaccination.

Hepatitis B: A virus transmitted from person to person through sexual contact, shared needles and needle-sharing equipment known as “works,” health care/occupational exposure and exposure to infected blood through a cut or break in the skin. Many infected people have no symptoms. Some people have mild flu-like symptoms, dark urine, light stools, jaundice, fatigue, and fever. Although there is no cure for the virus, most people will recover without medical treatment. A safe and effective vaccine is available for hepatitis B.

Hepatitis C: A virus transmitted when the infected blood of one person gets into the blood stream of another person. The majority of transmission is currently through the sharing of needles and needle sharing equipment (works). Most people who are infected with the hepatitis C virus do not have symptoms and lead normal lives. If symptoms are present they are generally mild flu-like symptoms, dark urine, light stools, jaundice, fatigue, and fever. Although there is treatment for hepatitis C, there is no cure. Even with treatment, some persons with hepatitis C may develop cirrhosis, liver cancer and ultimately, liver failure.

Hepatitis D and E: Less common strains of hepatitis found mostly in the developing world.

Herpes: A family of viruses (herpesviruses) that share certain traits. This family includes herpes simplex; varicella zoster virus (“chickenpox”); Epstein-Barr virus (“mononucleosis”); cytomegalovirus; human herpesvirus type 6 (“roseola”); and several others.

Herpes Encephalitis: A rare, severe illness that occurs when the brain becomes infected with HSV.

Herpes Gladiatorum: The presence of herpes lesions on the body caused by HSV infection that is transmitted usually through the abrasion of skin in a contact sport, such as wrestling.

Herpes Varicella Zoster Virus (HVZ or VZV): The varicella virus causes chicken pox in children and may reappear in adulthood as herpes zoster (shingles).

Herpes Simplex Virus I (HSV I): A virus that usually causes cold sores or fever blisters on the mouth or around the eyes yet can be transmitted to the genital region. The latent virus can be reactivated by stress, trauma, other infections, or suppression of the immune system.

Herpes Simplex Virus II (HSV II): Virus causing the majority of herpes infections as well as a small amount of oral herpes. The virus causes painful sores of the anus or genitals that may lie dormant in nerve tissue and can be reactivated to produce the symptoms. Approximately two-thirds of people who are infected do not know they have genital herpes, either because they have no symptoms or because they are so mild that they go unnoticed. HSV II may be transmitted to a neonate during birth from an infected mother.

Herpes Whitlow: The presence of herpes lesions on the fingers or toes.

Herpes Zoster: Also called shingles, consists of very painful blisters on the skin that follow nerve pathways.

HERR: Health Education Risk Reduction, or HERR, includes programs and services that are based on health education and health promotion strategies which result in positive changes in behavior, therefore reducing a person’s risk for contracting STDs.

Heterosexual: A person whose primary sexual attraction is toward members of the opposite sex.

High Risk Behavior: Behavior which can allow HIV to pass from one person to another, e.g., unprotected sex, sharing infected needles.

HIV: see Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

HIV-Infected: A person who carries the HIV virus.

Homosexual: A person whose primary sexual attraction is toward members of the same sex.

Hormone: An active regulatory chemical substance formed in one part of the body and carried by the blood to another part of the body, where it signals the coordination of cellular functions.

Host: A cell or organism that supports the growth of a parasite or virus.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV): The virus which causes AIDS. The virus is spread by contact with infected bodily fluids such as blood, semen, and vaginal discharge. HIV damages the cells in the immune system that fight off infections and diseases. As the virus gradually destroys these important cells, the immune system becomes less and less able to protect against illness. Certain life-threatening infections and cancers can then invade the body, causing serious illness and eventual death. However, HIV can live in an infected person's body for years before any signs of illness appear.

Humoral Immunity: The branch of the immune system that relies primarily upon antibodies. See also: Cellular immunity.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV): Human papillomavirus is one of the most common STDs. Certain types of HPV cause genital warts on the vulva, vagina, anus, cervix, penis or scrotum. These may be raised or flat, single or multiple, small or large. Some cluster together; some can't be seen by the naked eye (subclinical infection). Often flesh-colored and painless, genital warts only rarely cause symptoms such as itching, pain or bleeding. HPV and genital warts are usually spread by direct, skin-to-skin contact during sex. Warts might appear within several weeks after sex with an infected person, they might take months or years to appear or they might never appear. Little is known about the transmission of subclinical HPV infection. Other types of HPV (not the types that cause visible genital warts) are linked to cervical cancer. Yearly Pap smears are recommended to detect the abnormal cell growth caused by HPV that may progress to cervical cancer. If detected in time, the progression of cervical HPV can be stopped, and even cervical cancer can usually be treated successfully.

Hysterectomy: An operation in which the uterus and cervix are removed.

I

IFA (Immunofluorescence Assay): A test which is able to detect HIV antibodies in blood samples, often used to follow-up and confirm Elisa test results.

Immune Complex: Clusters formed when antigens and antibodies bind together.

Immune Deficiency: A breakdown or inability of certain parts of the immune system to function, thus making a person susceptible to certain diseases that they would have not contracted with a healthy immune system. Immune deficiencies may be temporary or permanent and be triggered by genetic mutation, therapy with immune-suppressive drugs (as during organ transplants) or an infection such as HIV.

Immune Response: The activity of the immune system against foreign substances.

Immune System: The body's natural defense against constant assault by microscopic organisms.

Immunity: Resistance to a disease, usually associated with possession of antibodies.

Immunocompetent: Refers to a healthy immune system capable of developing a normal protective response to an invading organism.

Immunocompromised: Describes a damaged immune system--may be due to HIV infection, other immune system disorders, or medication (such as chemotherapy)--which allows opportunistic infections to occur.

Immunoglobulin: See Antibodies.

Immunostimulant: Any agent or substance that triggers or enhances the body's defenses; also called immunopotentiators.

Immunosuppression: A state of the body in which the immune system is damaged and does not perform its normal functions. Immunosuppression may be induced by drugs or result from certain disease processes (such as HIV infection).

Immunotherapy: Treatment aimed at enhancing immunity.

In Utero: Latin for "in the uterus", or womb.

In Vitro ("in glass"): An artificial environment created outside a living organism, e.g., a test tube or culture plate, used in experimental research to study a disease or process.

In Vivo ("in life"): Studies conducted within a living organism, e.g., animal or human studies.

Incidence: The number of new cases of a disease that develop in a population during a specific period of time.

Incubation Period: The time interval between the initial exposure to infection and appearance of the first symptom, sign of disease, or positive lab test.

Indeterminate: A test result which neither shows or rules out infection.

Infection: Invasion and multiplication of a pathogen in a person's body, with or without symptoms⁴.

Infectious: Capable of being transmitted by infection.

Inflammation: The body's response to tissue injury or infection which occurs in the affected tissues and adjacent blood vessels. Signs of inflammation are redness, swelling, pain, and sometimes loss of function. Not all of these signs are necessarily present in any given case.

Informed Consent: The ability of people receiving experimental therapies to make competent decisions about their medical care. Patients are provided with an "informed consent form," which indicates the potential risks, benefits and alternatives to the therapy in question. If a clinical trial is involved, the trial protocol also is outlined, especially what participants will experience. After reading the informed consent form, individuals sign it to indicate that they understand its contents and agree to proceed with therapy under the conditions it outlines.

Inguinal Area: Pertaining to the groin.

Inoculate/Inoculation: To introduce an organism, serum vaccine, or other antigenic material into an individual.

Institutional Review Board (IRB): A committee of physicians, statisticians, community advocates, and others that insure that a clinical trial is ethical and that the rights of the study participants are protected. All clinical trials in the United States must be approved by the IRB before they begin.

Intersexual: An individual with ambiguous genitalia and/or biological sex traits, formerly referred to as a hermaphrodite.

Intracellular: Located inside cells.

Intramuscular: In the muscle; frequently in reference to injections.

Intravenous (IV) Drugs: Drugs injected into the veins with a needle.

Intravitreal: Within the eye.

ITP (Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura): A condition in which the body produces antibodies against the platelets, components of the blood that are responsible for blood clotting, resulting in low platelet counts and easy bleeding. ITP is common in HIV-infected people.

J

Jaundice: Yellowing of skin or eyes due to liver insufficiency.

K

Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS): An AIDS-defining illness consisting of individual cancerous lesions caused by an overgrowth of blood vessels. KS typically appears as pink or purple painless spots or nodules on the surface of the skin or oral cavity. KS also can occur internally, especially in the intestines, lymph nodes and lungs, and in this case is life-threatening. It appears that a herpesvirus (HHV-8) is responsible for KS.

Killer Cell: A generalized name for immune system cells that kill cancerous and virus-infected cells.

L

Labia Majora: The outer, large lips of the female genitalia or vulva.

Labia Minora: The small inner lips of the female external genitalia or vulva.

Laparoscopy: A surgical procedure in which a slender, light-transmitting telescope, the laparoscope, is used to view the pelvic organs or perform surgery.

LAS (Lymphadenopathy Syndrome): A chronic enlargement of the lymph nodes, often associated with HIV infection.

Latency: The period when a person is infected yet no symptoms are present.

Latent: Present but without symptoms. Example: a stage of syphilis when no symptoms are present.

Lavage: Washing.

Lesion: A general term to describe an area of altered tissue; the infected patch or sore in a skin disease.

Leukocytes: All white blood cells.

Leukopenia: A lower than normal level of leukocytes in the blood.

Lice: see Pubic Lice.

Localized: Restricted to a limited region of the body. The effects of many STDs are localized and if treated early do not progress beyond that region.

Long-Term Nonprogressor: An individual who has been infected with HIV for at least seven to twelve years (different authors use different time spans) and yet has not progressed to AIDS.

Lubricant: A slippery substance. Can be oil- or water-based. Only water-based lubricants are safe to use with latex condoms.

Lymph Node (Lymph Gland): Small bean-shaped organs made up mostly of lymphocytes, lymph fluid, and connective tissue. Clusters of lymph nodes are widely distributed in the body and are essential to the functioning of the immune system. They are connected with each other and other lymphoid tissue by the lymphatic vessels. They help prevent the spread of infection.

Lymphadenopathy: Swollen, firm and possibly tender lymph nodes. The cause may range from an infection such as HIV, the flu, mononucleosis, or lymphoma (cancer of the lymph nodes).

Lymphocyte: While blood cells that mature and reside in the lymph organs and are responsible for the acquired immune response (see Immune System). The two major types of lymphocytes are T-cells and B-cells.

M

MAC (Mycobacterium Avium Complex): A serious opportunistic infection caused by two similar bacteria (*Mycobacterium avium* and *Mycobacterium intercellular*) found in the soil and dust particles. In AIDS, MAC can spread through the bloodstream to infect lymph nodes, bone marrow, liver, spleen, spinal fluid, lungs and intestinal tract. Typical symptoms of MAC include night sweats, weight loss, fever, fatigue, diarrhea and enlarged spleen. MAC is usually found in people with CD4 counts below 100. MAC is also called MAI.

Macrophage: A scavenger cell specializing in the ingestion and processing of large particulate matter, especially harmful bacteria. The macrophage may be a reservoir for HIV.

Malabsorption: Inability of the intestines to absorb food, drug or any substance needed to maintain good health.

Malaise: A vague feeling of bodily discomfort and fatigue. This is a common symptom of many illnesses, including many STDs, and can often be the result of infection or a drug's side effects.

Malnutrition: Poor nutrition resulting from inadequate diet, under eating or abnormal absorption of nutrients from the gastrointestinal tract.

Manifestation: The outward sign that an illness is present – a symptom or condition.

Microorganism: Any form of life of microscopic size, e.g., bacteria, protozoa, fungi, viruses, bacteria, parasites.

Microbes: Microscopic living organisms, including bacteria, protozoa, and fungi.

Micronutrient: A trace element; an organic compound like a vitamin that is essential but only in small amounts for physical health, growth and metabolism.

Monilia: A type of infection caused by the overgrowth of candida. It is also called a yeast infection. A common factor increasing the chance of yeast is the use of oral antibiotics.

Monoclonal Antibodies: Antibodies produced by a single cell or its identical progeny, specific to a given antigen. Monoclonal antibodies are useful as a tool for identifying specific protein molecules.

Monocyte: A large white blood cell that acts as a scavenger, capable of destroying invading bacteria or other foreign material. Precursor to the macrophage.

Monogamy: Having sexual relations with only one person.

Morbidity: The number of sick persons or cases of disease in a specific population..

Mortality: The number of deaths due to disease within a population at a given time.

MTF: A male-to-female transgendered person who may or may not be a pre-operative, post-operative, or non-operative transsexual.

Mucosa: Mucous membrane.

Mucosal: Pertaining to the mucous membranes, as in mouth, vagina, rectum, etc....

Mucous Membrane: Every natural body opening, including the nose and mouth, rectum and vagina, has mucous membranes which help prevent organisms from attacking interior organs of the body.

Mucous Patches: White, patchy mouth growths. Are symptoms of some diseases (eg. syphilis, HIV).

Mycosis: Any disease caused by a fungus.

Myopathy: A degenerative condition of the muscles. Can be caused by both HIV, AZT, and other diseases and drugs.

N

Neisseria Gonorrhoea: The genus and species of the gonococcus, the causative organism of gonorrhoea.

Neonatal: Concerning the first week of life after birth.

Neoplasm: An abnormal and uncontrolled growth of tissue; a tumor.

Neuropathy: Any disease of the nervous system.

Neurosyphilis: A later stage of syphilis in which the disease attacks the nervous system.

Non-Communicable: Cannot be transmitted from one person to another.

Non-Gonococcal Urethritis (NGU): A sexually transmitted disease mainly diagnosed in males. Can be caused by a number of different types of organisms; however, some cases are caused by chlamydia.

Non-Oxynol 9: A substance which kills HIV sperm and some STDs.

O

Ocular: Pertaining to the eye.

Ocular Herpes: Symptoms caused by herpes infection in the eyes.

Opportunistic Infections (OI): Infections that occur in persons with weak immune systems (eg. PCP, MAC, TB, bacterial pneumonia).

Ovary: The female reproductive gland in which eggs (ova) are produced. There are two: one near the end of each fallopian tube.

P

Papule: A small elevation or bump on the skin.

Palliative: A treatment that provides symptomatic relief, but not a cure.

Pandemic: The spread of a disease over a wide geographic area, affecting vast numbers of people.

Pap Smear: A medical test used to discover pre-cancerous or cancerous states of the cervix. Named for its developer, Dr. Papanicolaou.

Parasite: Organism with the ability to live within or upon and at the expense of the host.

Partner Services: Partner services refers to STD/HIV disease management through education, case management and referral of sexual and/or needle-sharing partner(s) for testing, counseling, and treatment of an STD/HIV.

Pathogen: Any disease-producing microorganism or material. A germ.

Pathology: The science of the essential nature of diseases, especially of the structural and functional changes in tissues and organs of the body that are caused by disease.

PCPE: Prevention Counseling Partner Elicitation. Prevention counseling is client-centered counseling that occurs between a trained prevention counselor and an individual regarding his/her risk for HIV/STDs during which a plan to reduce the risk of an infection is developed. Partner elicitation is the process by which locating and identifying information is obtained from an individual testing positive to ensure the confidential and prompt referral for testing and/or treatment of sex and needle-sharing partners at risk.

PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction): A highly sensitive test that can detect DNA or RNA fragments of viruses or other organisms in blood or tissue; distinguishes specific sequences of DNA.

Pediatric: Relating to the medical specialty concerned with the development, care, and treatment of children from birth through adolescence.

Pediculosis Pubis: Pubic or crab lice.

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID): A serious infection and inflammation of the female organs of the pelvic cavity. Is a complication of gonorrhea and chlamydial infections in women. Can cause sterility or ectopic pregnancy.

Pelvis: The lower portion of the trunk of the body, bounded by the two hip bones and sacrum and coccyx. A pelvic examination involves examination of the female reproductive organs through visualization of the cervix and palpation of the internal organs.

Penicillin: An antibiotic used in treatment of communicable diseases.

Penis: Male organ for copulation (sexual intercourse) and urination.

Perianal: Around the anus.

Perinatal: Events that occur at or around the time of birth.

Perinatal Transmission: Transmission of a pathogen from mother to baby during birth.

pH: The acidity or alkalinity of a solution, measured by the hydrogen ion concentration of a solution. Neutral, or normal, body pH is 7.4.

Phagocyte: A cell that is able to ingest and destroy foreign matter, including bacteria.

PID: See Pelvic Inflammatory Disease.

Placebo: An inactive substance against which investigational treatments are compared for efficacy.

Placebo Effect: A change that occurs after a placebo is taken, due to the expectations of the patient.

Placenta: A combination of fetal and maternal cells that serves as the organ of exchange for nutrients and other chemicals between mother and fetus during pregnancy.

Plasma: The fluid of blood in which the red and white blood cells are suspended.

Plasma Cells: Large antibody-producing cells that develop from B cells.

Platelets: Circulating cellular fragments critical for blood clotting and sealing off wounds.

Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia (PCP): A form of pneumonia caused by a parasite that reproduces in the lung. It is an opportunistic infection with AIDS.

Postcoital: After sexual intercourse.

Post-Partum: After giving birth.

Prenatal: Relating to the period before birth.

Prevalence: The total number of cases of a disease existing at a point in time in a given area. It represents the reservoir of infection in the community and may be known or estimated.

Prevent: To keep something from happening.

Prevention: Methods for stopping transmission of disease including abstinence and monogamy with an uninfected partner who is also monogamous. Other prevention methods cannot eliminate possible transmission of HIV/STDs, merely reduce the risk (reduced harm). These methods include practicing safer sex and limiting sex partners.

Primary HIV Infection: The flu-like syndrome that occurs immediately after a person contracts HIV. This initial infection precedes seroconversion and is characterized by fever, sore throat, headache, skin rash and swollen glands. Also called acute infection.

Proctitis: Inflammation of the rectum.

Prodrome: A warning symptom of illness. (i.e., prodrome for a genital herpes outbreak often involves an aching, burning, itching, or tingling sensation in the genital area, buttocks, or legs).

Prophylactic Treatment: Medical treatment of a person who has been exposed to an infectious disease (eg. syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia) and who could be in the incubation period but not showing any symptoms. This treatment may prevent the disease from developing.

Prophylaxis: A prevention or protection against disease.

Prostate Gland: Anatomical structure that surrounds the neck of the urinary bladder on the beginning of the male urethra.

Protease: An enzyme that triggers the breakdown of proteins. HIV's protease enzyme breaks apart long strands of viral protein into the separate proteins making up viral core. The enzyme acts as new virus particles are budding off a cell membrane.

Protease Inhibitor: A drug that binds to and blocks HIV protease from working, thus preventing the production of new infectious viral particles.

Proteins: Organic compounds made up of amino acids. Proteins are one of the major constituents of plant and animal cells.

Protozoa: A cellular or unicellular organism which constitutes the lowest division of the animal kingdom; may be parasitic.

Pruritis: Itching.

Pubic Lice: Tiny insects that live in the pubic hair. They can be transmitted through sexual contact, but also by exchanging of sleeping bags, clothes, or bedding. Symptoms are noticing the parasites, or itching. Also known as crabs.

Pulmonary: Pertaining to the lungs.

Pustule: A small raised lesion containing pus.

PWA: A person living with AIDS, also known as PLWA (person living with AIDS).

Q

Qualitative: Pertaining to quality; specifically, determining whether a serum is reactive or nonreactive in serologic tests for syphilis (STS).

Quantitative: Denoting quantity; specifically, determining in number of dilutions the degree to which a serum is reactive in an STS.

R

Radiology: The science of diagnosis and/or treatment using radiant energy. Includes X-rays, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), destruction of tumors by radiation, etc.

Rash: A general term applied to any eruption of the skin, especially those pertaining to communicable diseases. A rash is usually a shade of red, which varies with disease and is usually temporary.

Reagin: An antibody-like substance found in the sera of patients with syphilis.

Rectum: The end portion of the digestive tract.

Recurrence: The return of symptoms after a remission (time without symptoms). An example of this is outbreaks of herpes after periods of time without herpes lesions.

Refractory: Resistant to treatment, as of a disease.

Regimen: Any particular treatment plan specifying which drugs are used, in what dose, according to what schedule, and for how long.

Reinterview: Any interview after the original interview with a STD patient.

Remission: The lessening of the severity or duration of outbreaks, or the abatement of symptoms altogether over a period of time.

Renal: Pertaining to the kidneys.

Replication: The process by which cells, genes, and viruses reproduce.

Resistance: The ability of some pathogens to grow and multiply even in the presence of certain drugs which normally kill them.

Retinitis: Inflammation of the retina, linked in AIDS to CMV infection. Untreated, it can lead to blindness.

Retrovirus: A virus that carries its genetic information in the form of RNA and contains reverse transcriptase, the protein which enables it to convert its RNA to DNA.

Reverse Transcriptase: A protein in the inner core of a retrovirus which enables it to make DNA copies from its RNA genes.

Rhagades: Scars or fissures around the mouth or nose resulting from congenital syphilis. Can also be due to vitamin deficiencies.

Ribonucleic Acid (RNA): A molecule used instead of DNA by certain viruses (such as HIV) to carry their genetic blueprint.

Risk: The chance or possibility of infection.

S

Safer Sex: Sexual activity which inhibits the sharing of body fluids (using a condom and spermicide) to protect against infection with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Salmonella: A bacteria that is a common cause of food poisoning in undercooked poultry and eggs. Can be serious in HIV-positive persons.

Sample Size: The number of participants required to conduct a clinical trial.

Scabies: A parasitic skin disease caused by a burrowing mite. The mite is passed by close personal contact with an infected individual. Symptoms include intense itching and rashes.

Scrotum: External pouch of skin that contains the testicles.

Self-inoculation: The introduction of microorganisms from one's own body.

Semen: Thick whitish fluid ejaculated at male orgasm, contains sperm cells.

Seminal Vesicles: Two glands that connect with the ejaculatory duct.

Sensitivity: The ability of a test to detect infection/disease.

Seroconversion: The point at which HIV antibodies may be detected on antibody tests. The vast majority of people will seroconvert within three months of becoming infected.

Serologic Test: Any of a number of tests that are performed on the clear, liquid portion of blood (serum). Often refers to a test that determines the presence of antibodies.

Seropositive: A test result indicating that antibodies to a particular disease or virus are found in the blood. "Sero" refers to the blood serum used to run the test.

Serostatus: The presence or absence of antibodies to a specific pathogen (such as HIV) in the serum portion of the blood.

Serum: The clear, non-cellular portion of the blood containing antibodies.

Sexual Intercourse: Penetrative physical sexual contact between individuals including anal, vaginal, and oral contact.

Sexual Orientation: The way an individual's sexual attractions are directed (eg. homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, or asexual). Transgender individuals may be straight, gay, lesbian, or asexual, however, as in the general population most are straight. Sexual orientation labels often cease to have meaning for some transgender individuals, such as those who do not consider themselves to be either gender or sex.

Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD): An infection that is transmitted through sexual intercourse.

Shingles: See Herpes Zoster.

Side Effects: The action or effect of a drug other than that desired. The term usually refers to undesired or negative effects, such as headache, skin irritation, or liver damage. Experimental drugs must be evaluated for both immediate and long-term side effects.

Sign: Any visual evidence of disease.

Specificity: A test's ability to give true negative results in the absence of the disease that the test is designed to reveal.

Spermicide: A contraceptive that kills sperm. Nonoxynol-9 is spermicide that kills HIV.

Spirochete: A descriptive term for the causative organism of syphilis. A corkscrew-shaped bacteria with unique motility. Example: *Treponema pallidum*.

Staph: Short for staphylococcus, a common bacteria that can cause serious infections.

STD Field Investigation: The confidential pursuit of persons at risk for STD/HIV performed by a trained Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS). The goals of STD Field Investigation are: to abort incubating disease, to stop the spread of disease and to prevent the development of complications in untreated persons.

Sterility: The condition of being unable to reproduce others of its kind.

Steroids: Synthetic forms of testosterone and other male hormones.

STS: Serologic tests for syphilis.

Subclinical Infection: An infection, or phase of infection, without readily apparent symptoms or signs of disease.

Subcutaneous: Beneath or introduced beneath the skin (e.g., subcutaneous injections).

Suppressor T Cells: (T8, CD8) Subset of T cells that halt antibody production and other immune responses.

Surveillance: The process of acquiring information about the incidence and prevalence of disease in an area.

Susceptible: Vulnerable or predisposed to a disease.

Symptom: An abnormal sensation or appearance indicating the presence of a disorder or a disease.

Symptomatic Phase: The phase when a person begins to develop and/or experience symptoms of a disease.

Syndrome: A group of symptoms and diseases that together are characteristic of a specific condition.

Syphilis: A bacterial sexually transmitted infection. Symptoms include skin ulcers, then flu like symptoms with rash, then a latent stage where it may damage the brain, spinal cord, heart, and other organs.

Systemic: Affecting the whole body.

T

T Cells (T lymphocytes): A thymus-derived white blood cell that participates in a variety of cell-mediated immune reactions. Three fundamentally different types of T cells are recognized: helper, killer, and suppressor (each has many subdivisions).

T Suppressor Cells: T lymphocytes responsible for turning the immune response off after infection is cleared, a subset of CD8+ lymphocytes.

T Killer Cells: A major component of cytotoxic lymphocyte response (CTL), responsible for lysing infected or cancerous cells; a subset of CD8+ lymphocytes.

Tattoo: An indelible mark or figure fixed upon the body through insertion of pigment under the skin by a sharp instrument.

Testes: Male sex glands; testicles.

Thrush: A common name for candidiasis, a yeast-like fungal infection that can appear as white patches in the mouth, throat, and vagina.

Thymus: A lymphoid organ in the upper chest cavity where T cells mature.

Titer ("titre"): A laboratory measurement of the amount (or concentration) of a given component in solution.

Topical: Applied to the skin or other external areas.

Toxicity: The extent, quality, or degree of being poisonous or harmful to the body.

Toxin: A poisonous substance.

Toxoplasmosis: An opportunistic infection caused by the protozoan *Toxoplasma gondii*. It frequently causes focal encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Toxoplasmosis may also involve the heart, lung, adrenal, pancreas, and testis.

Transgender: A transgendered person crosses, defies, transgresses, or plays with socially constructed gender roles, expression, or identity on an ongoing basis. This is an umbrella term used by cross-dressers, transsexuals, drag queens, and kings, bigenders, intersexuals, androgynes, gender benders, etc.

Transmission: The passing of infection or disease from one person to another.

Transsexual: A person whose gender is the opposite of the sex they were assigned. They may elect to live full time in the opposite sex, and they may seek hormones, surgery, or electrolysis in order to pass.

Transvestite: See Cross-dresser (which is considered a more respectful term).

Treponema Pallidum: The organism, spirochete, that causes syphilis.

Trichomonas: A one-celled parasite that causes a vaginal infection. It is passed during sexual intercourse from one partner to another. For women, symptoms may include abnormal discharge, swelling of the labia, discomfort with intercourse, burning with urination, or there may be no symptoms. Men generally do not show symptoms. Often called Trich.

Tuberculosis: An infectious bacterial disease which specifically affects the lungs, but which may affect any tissue in the body.

U

Urethra: The tube leading from the bladder to the outside of the body. In the male, the canal serves as a passageway for urine and semen.

Urethritis: Inflammation of the urethra.

Urinary Tract Infection: An infection of the urethra, bladder and/or kidney which can be caused by chlamydia, herpes, or other bacteria. The most common symptoms are the feeling of having to urinate often, pain and burning with urination, and blood in the urine.

Uterus: The womb; the organ in which the fetus is contained prior to birth.

V

Vaccine: A substance injected into the body which produces immunity to disease.

Vagina: Female birth canal and organ for sexual intercourse or coitus.

Vaginal Fluids/Secretions: The fluids which are discharged from the wall of the woman's vagina.

Vaginitis: Inflammation of the vagina; marked by discomfort and a discharge.

Varicella: See Herpes Varicella Zoster virus.

Vasectomy: A surgery that makes it impossible for a man to cause conception by blocking the tubes that carry sperm to mix with the seminal fluid. The operation does not affect hormone production, masculine characteristics, sex drive, or the ability to have an erection, ejaculation, or orgasm.

Vas Deferens: Anatomical structure connecting the epididymis with the ejaculatory tube; cord that transports sperm.

Vector: An animal, usually an insect, which transfers an infectious agent from an infected host to a susceptible host.

Venereal Diseases (VD): An outdated term for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

Vertical Transmission: Transmission of HIV from mother to fetus.

Vesicle: A small blister.

Viral Load: The number of viral particles (usually HIV) in a sample of blood plasma. HIV viral load is employed as a marker for disease progression.

Viral Culture: A laboratory method for growing viruses.

Viral Replication: The process by which a virus makes more copies of itself.

Virology: The study of viruses and viral disease.

Virulence: The ability of a microorganism to produce serious disease.

Virus: A minute infectious agent, not visible under the light microscope, and characterized by lack of independent metabolism and by an ability to reproduce only within living host cells. Viruses do not respond to antibiotics. For some we have treatments that interrupt the virus multiplying, for others we have immunizations. We have no cure for most viral infections.

Vulva: External female genitalia.

W

Wart: A skin growth that may be caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). Occurs mostly in the genital area.

Wasting Syndrome: Progressive, involuntary weight loss associated with advanced HIV infection.

Western Blot: A laboratory test for the presence of specific antibodies often used to confirm Elisa test results.

White Blood Cells: Cells in the blood which fight against infection by destroying disease-causing organisms.

Y

Yeast: A small fungus that reproduces by budding; any of various similar fungi.