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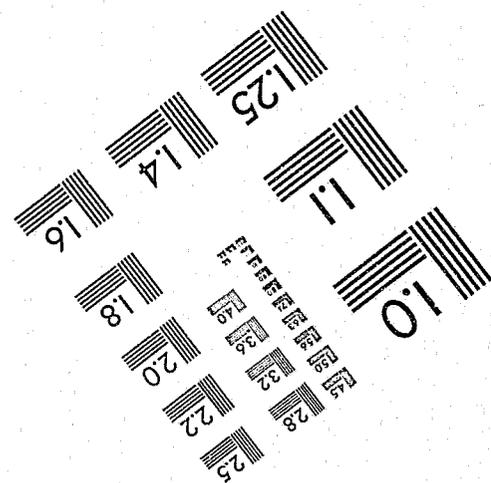
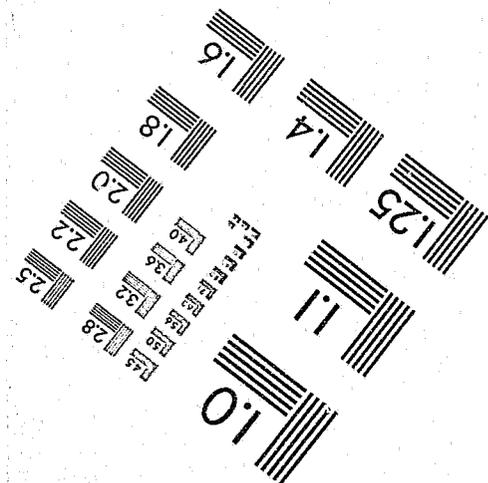
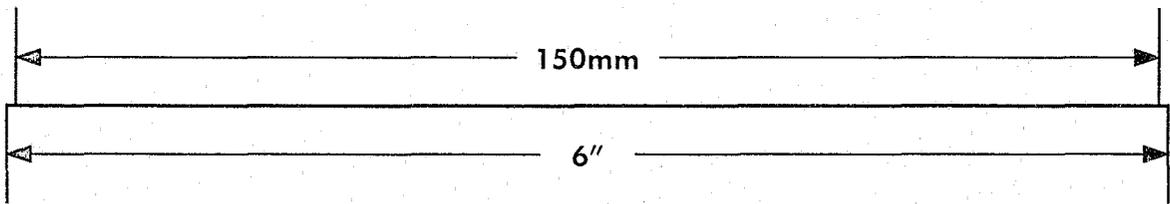
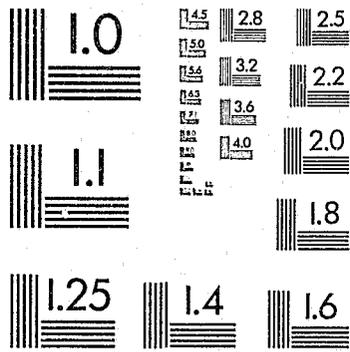
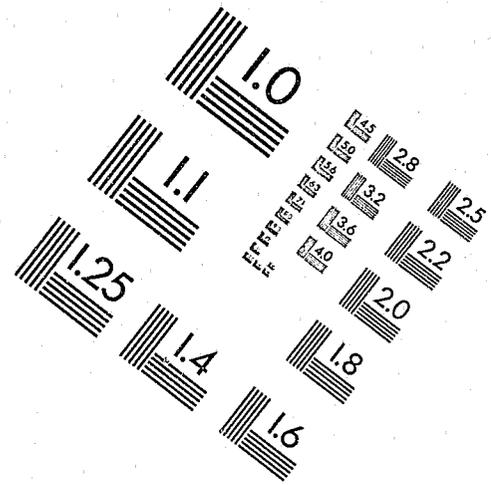
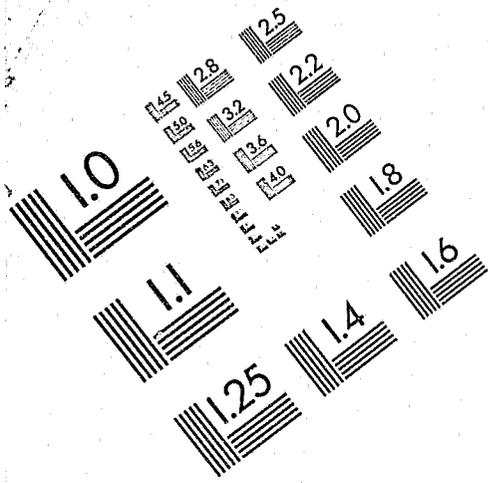


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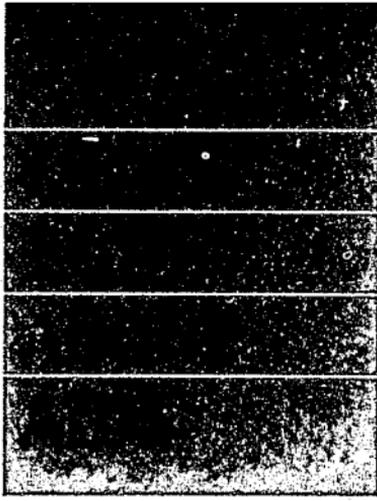
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Facts

About AIDS

and Drug

Abuse



American
Red Cross



U.S. Public
Health Service

107003

**U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice**

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What Is AIDS?

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is a deadly disease that destroys the body's immune defense system, its ability to fight off some infections and cancers. People with AIDS get diseases that healthy people are able to shake off. About half of the people in the United States who have developed AIDS have died; no AIDS patient has recovered.

AIDS is caused by a virus* that is passed from one person to another in blood or semen. It is usually transmitted through sex with an infected person or by sharing contaminated drug needles. It can also be passed from an infected mother to her newborn baby.

It is *not* spread by casual everyday contact, such as sneezing, shaking hands, or eating or working in an office with another person.

Why Should Drug Users Worry About AIDS?

The two groups at greatest risk for AIDS are homosexual or bisexual men (or men who have had sex with another man since 1977) and people who shoot drugs. People who use needles to inject drugs—including mainliners and skin poppers—get the virus by sharing their works with other users who already have the AIDS virus in their blood.

You can't always tell who is infected with the AIDS virus. People carrying the virus may look and feel well, but they can still spread the disease. Symptoms of AIDS may not show up for several years. Many remain without symptoms even then.

Thousands of IV drug abusers already have AIDS, and many thousands more are carrying the virus.

How Else Can You Get AIDS?

Besides sharing works, people get AIDS by having sex with people who have the virus. AIDS can be spread

*The virus that causes AIDS and related disorders has several different names: HTLV-III, LAV, ARV, and most recently, HIV. In this brochure it is called "the AIDS virus."

between men and other men, and between men and women.

Prostitutes can carry the AIDS virus, which they may get from their sex partners or because they themselves are often IV drug users. They can also spread the disease to other people.

What About Other People?

If you become infected by the AIDS virus you may not get sick and you may not know you've been infected. But you can spread the disease to other people by sharing your works with them or by having sex with them.

Women who shoot drugs or who live with men who shoot drugs sometimes give AIDS to their babies, either before or right after birth. Babies born with AIDS become ill very quickly.

How Can You Protect Yourself and Others From AIDS?

First, stop using and shooting drugs.

If you keep using IV drugs, there is a good chance you will get the AIDS virus, and you may get AIDS. You can reduce the chances of infection if you—

- Do *not* share needles, syringes, works, or cookers—even with someone you know.
- Do *not* rent works or buy works that have been used by someone else. Check the package you buy to be sure it has not been resealed. Sometimes used needles and syringes are sold as new ones.
- Do not have sex with people who have AIDS or who might have the AIDS virus (homosexual or bisexual men, prostitutes, other IV drug users). If you do, use condoms and avoid sex practices like anal sex that can cause injury to body tissues.

And remember that you may be infected with the virus and can spread it to your sex partners, so be careful to protect them from your body fluids if you have sex.

- See a doctor or go to a clinic to find out whether you may already have been infected with the AIDS virus. Ask for an AIDS antibody test and an examination.
- Limit your sex partners to one. *The more people you have sex with, the greater the chance of getting AIDS.*
- If you have been having sex with an IV drug user, try to get him or her to stop using drugs and go into drug treatment. This can reduce the risk that you and your partner will get AIDS.
- Don't leave your works around where others can pick them up and stick themselves. You could transmit AIDS to other people this way.

If you shoot drugs, you are in danger of catching AIDS. The best advice for protecting yourself and people you love is to *stop shooting drugs.*

Persons at Increased Risk of Infection by the AIDS Virus

Persons in the following groups are at increased risk of infection by the AIDS virus:

- Homosexual and bisexual men (or men who have had sex with another man since 1977)
- People who inject illegal intravenous drugs or who have done so in the past
- Persons with symptoms of AIDS or AIDS-related illnesses
- Persons from Haiti and Central African countries, where heterosexual transmission is thought to be more common than in the United States
- Male or female prostitutes and their sex partners
- Sex partners of persons infected with the AIDS virus or at increased risk of infection
- Persons with hemophilia who have received clotting factor products
- Infants of high-risk or infected mothers

More information about AIDS and AIDS-related illnesses can be obtained from—

- ⊙ Your doctor.
- ⊙ Your state or local health department.
- ⊙ The Public Health Service's toll-free hotline:
1-800-342-AIDS.
- ⊙ Your local chapter of the American Red Cross.

**If you would like information about drug treatment programs, call the toll-free hotline of the National Institute on Drug Abuse:
1-800-662-HELP.**

**U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services**

Public Health Service

**Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and
Mental Health Administration**

National Institute on Drug Abuse



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