

# Healthy Options for Women



A Women's Health in Women's Hands Resource



# Healthy Options for Women

## Who is this booklet for?

If you are a Black woman living in Canada, who is pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, then this booklet is for you.

We hope that women will share the information in this booklet with their partners to help them provide the support you may need to make decisions about HIV testing and/or treatment during pregnancy.



## Why is it important for pregnant women to know about HIV and AIDS?

A pregnant woman who does not know she is infected with HIV could pass the virus to her unborn child. If she knows she is infected (or HIV positive), she can take steps to protect her baby. Often, people who are infected don't show any signs of the virus, so the only way you can know for sure is to have an HIV test.



**M**ost women who take the test will have a negative result. If you take the test and find out that you are HIV positive, there are many treatments or courses of action you can take to reduce the risk of HIV being passed to your baby.

## It Is Your Right to Make Decisions About Your Health

In some African and Caribbean cultures, a woman is expected to marry and have children as early as possible. Many women do not feel comfortable talking with their partners about "safer sex", using condoms whenever you have sex or even deciding how many children to have. Or they may feel pressure to have children no matter what their situation or HIV status.

Some women may not be comfortable enough to ask questions about their health. Some may be involved in a long-term relationship and still have difficulty talking about "safer sex" with their partner. Other women may be involved in abusive relationships or relationships where their partners make all the decisions and put what they want ahead of women's needs.

## What about trust?

Most married women or women involved in long-term relationships think that trusting their partners is enough to protect them from getting infected.

For most African and Caribbean women, many relationships are based on "trust".



## You trust that:

- Your boyfriend or husband is only having sex with you;
- He has not injected drugs or shared needles with anyone;
- He is not bisexual or having sex with other men;
- He does not have a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that could pose a health risk to you;
- He will not force you to have sex when you are not ready.

Trusting your partner is not enough! Women need to have information to keep themselves and their babies healthy.

If women know they are HIV infected before or early in their pregnancy they have a better chance for staying healthy and ensuring the virus is not passed to their babies. If you are not infected you can learn ways to lower the risk of becoming infected.

**Y**ou can get information about HIV testing and treatments from your doctor and sexual health clinics. It is up to you to decide if you want to get tested.

Remember taking an HIV test is important for you to stay healthy and ensure a healthy baby!





# What is the Difference Between HIV and AIDS?

(and other commonly asked questions)

## What is HIV?

HIV stands for **H**uman **I**mmunodeficiency **V**irus, the virus that is believed to cause AIDS. The virus attacks the body's immune system (which protects you from infection) making it hard for an infected person to fight disease and infections.

## What is AIDS?

AIDS is the advanced stage of HIV disease. When a person with HIV starts to develop serious illnesses (known as AIDS-related infections) due to their weakened immune system, they have AIDS, **A**cquired **I**mmune **D**eficiency **S**ndrome.

## How Do People Get HIV?

HIV can be found in body fluids such as blood, breast milk, semen (sperm) and vaginal fluids. It can be passed on in the following ways:



### High Risk for HIV/AIDS:

- Having sex (vaginal, anal, oral) with an HIV infected person without using a latex condom - most women become infected with HIV by having sex with an HIV infected man
- Receiving blood transfusions from HIV infected blood - in Canada, before November, 1985 - or in other countries where you are not sure the blood was tested for HIV
- From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, birth or through breastfeeding
- Sharing needles for intravenous (IV) drug use, tattoos or body piercing

### You Cannot Get HIV/AIDS From:

- Holding or shaking hands with an HIV-positive person
- Sharing a drink with someone who has HIV/AIDS
- Kissing someone with HIV/AIDS
- Sharing utensils with an infected person
- Mosquito bites

## Can you tell if someone is HIV positive?

No! You can't tell if someone is infected by looking at him or her. Some people living with virus stay healthy for years.

## What is the HIV test?

It is a blood test. A small amount of blood is taken from your arm to check for HIV anti-bodies which are produced by the body in response to the presence of the HIV virus. If you test positive for antibodies it means the virus is in your blood. If you test negative then you don't have HIV. Whether you are infected or not you should use condoms especially if you are not aware of your partner or your HIV status.



## What is the window period?

There is a gap between being exposed to the HIV virus and it showing up in a test. That gap is called the **window period**. If you choose to get tested make sure it's not done during the window period.



## Why take the HIV test?

It gives you information you may need to stay healthy and to protect your child before and after birth.

Some women expect their doctors to tell them what to do. HIV is too serious for any woman not to take part in protecting her own health and her baby's health.

In Ontario, doctors must offer HIV counseling and testing to all pregnant women as part of prenatal care. **You must give your consent before an HIV test can be done.** If this information is not provided you can request it.

There are organizations that can give you more information and help you decide what is best for you. See the back of this booklet for a listing of HIV/AIDS organizations, testing sites, health centres and community organizations. You can also phone your local hospital or the AIDS Hotline and they will direct you. Or speak to a health provider at Women's Health in Women's Hands (416) 593-7655.

## Are you at "Risk"?

- Have you ever had unprotected sex (sex without a condom)?
- Have you ever shared needles for injecting drugs, body piercing or tattoos?
- Have you ever had a sexually transmitted infection?
- Have you ever had a blood transfusion in the past (in Canada before November 1985 or more recently in your country of origin)?



- Have you been sexually assaulted?
- Have you had an operation/procedure in a country where sterilizing instruments or knives was not possible?
- Are you unsure of your partner's current/past sexual practices/drug using behaviours?

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, then you could be at risk. The only way that you can be sure that you haven't been exposed to the virus is if you know that you and your partner are HIV negative.

For some African and Caribbean women, cultural practices such as 'vaginal cleansing', Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), wife inheritance, or the lack of power to negotiate safer sex, increases their risk of getting infected. Violence, sexual assault or having an undetected sexually transmitted infection increases a woman's risk for HIV even further.

You could be at risk if you've had a blood transfusion in a country where you can't be sure the blood supply was tested for HIV. Or if you had an operation in a country where it wasn't possible for the surgical instruments or knives to be properly sterilized. If you or your partner have had a previous partner who was HIV positive, you could also be at risk or if you or your partner have shared needles for IV drug use, tattoos or body piercing.

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Some African cultures practice female genital mutilation, a procedure where the outer folds of the vagina and/or clitoris are cut and removed. FGM can cause serious health risks for girls and women - including HIV infection. A woman who is infibulated is at high risk of getting HIV if she has sex with an HIV positive man - including her husband - because of the tearing and irritation of skin during sexual intercourse.

Vaginal cleansing, using certain liquids to dry the natural fluids of the vagina before having sex, is another practice that puts women at high risk for HIV. This can lead to irritation and tearing of the vagina during sex, leaving women open to infections.







## Abuse

Abuse is when someone tries to control what you do, who you see or how you feel about yourself. If your husband or partner abuses you, then you are at risk for getting HIV and other STDs.

**W**omen are at a greater risk of getting HIV than men.

Physical abuse, or the threat of it, can force you to do things that put you at risk for getting HIV - like not using condoms during sex because you are fearful of the consequences if you request that your partner use one.

Sexual abuse can include your partner forcing you to have sex or trying to hurt you during sex. You can become infected if you experience tears in the vagina or anus during violent or aggressive sex.

**If you don't feel safe, you are probably right. But there are places you can contact to get help. Talk to a Women's Health in Women's Hands healthcare provider for more information. You have the right to protect yourself.**

## Men who have Sex with Men (Bisexual Men)

Some women don't know that their male partners have sex with other men. Some men who have wives or girlfriends are also having sex with other men. When a community has a negative attitude about people who are gay or lesbian, this is called homophobia. Homophobia can cause some men who have sexual relationships with men and women to keep their sexual preference secret. They play the part of a loving husband or boyfriend but are drawn to having sex with other men. Some women become infected from their partners who have sex with other men.



# HIV Testing and Your Pregnancy

## You've decided to have a baby - should you and your partner get tested?

The best time to get tested is before you get pregnant. If you've been using condoms, but now decide to get pregnant, getting an HIV test could be useful. If the result is positive, it means you have the virus. **But it does not mean you have AIDS.**

If you know before you become pregnant that you are infected, you will have more time to think about your options. **A positive result does not mean you can't have children.** Your doctor or health care provider will make sure you have the care you need.

## Testing Options



You can get tested at your family doctor's office. But this doesn't guarantee confidentiality. **Your doctor cannot provide anonymous testing because HIV positive results must be reported to the department of public health.**

## Anonymous Testing

Many clinics offer anonymous HIV testing to protect your privacy. They guarantee that your test results can not be linked to your name. The results are confidential and only you have access to this information. This way you don't have to worry that anyone else will know you've been tested or your results. **Your partner, family and employer won't know you've been tested.**



**Make sure that the clinic offers anonymous testing when you decide to have the HIV test. Your family doctor cannot offer anonymous testing.**

To find out the location of your nearest anonymous testing clinic, contact the AIDS-Sexual Health InfoLine at (416) 392-2437 or 1-800-668-2437 outside Toronto. For more information on testing options talk to a Women's Health in Women's Hands health care provider or see the list of clinics at the end of this booklet.

## Why is the HIV test offered to all pregnant women in Ontario?

Getting tested can give you the knowledge you need to make informed decisions, stay healthy and if you choose to continue your pregnancy, produce a healthy child .

## What tests will I have when I get pregnant?

You should make an appointment for prenatal care with your family doctor as soon as you know you're pregnant. You will be asked questions about your health - including if you've been pregnant before - and about any illnesses you may have had. Your doctor will do several blood tests to check that you don't have measles, syphilis or Hepatitis B (a disease that affects the liver). These illnesses could be a problem for you and your baby. HIV is also one of the recommended test as part of prenatal care to prevent transmission of HIV during pregnancy, birth or through breast feeding.



Talking about HIV makes some people uncomfortable. You can bring a friend, partner or someone else you trust to support you. Make a list of all the questions you want to ask - not just about HIV. If you need an interpreter you should ask for one



## Can't I be tested for HIV automatically?

No. You have to say "yes" before your doctor can give you an HIV test. Doing an HIV test without your consent is against the law in Ontario. **Remember, your family doctor cannot offer anonymous testing.**

### Your rights about HIV testing:

- You have the right to be treated with respect when getting tested whatever your test result turns out to be
- You have the right to ask about the test
- You have the right to take the test
- You have the right to refuse to be tested
- You have the right to have accurate, up to date information
- You have the right to confidentiality whatever your HIV result
- If you decide not to have an HIV test, you have the right to the same treatment as any other pregnant woman
- If you test positive, you have the right to the best possible treatment
- If you are HIV positive, you have the right to the same treatment as a pregnant woman who is HIV negative or untested

## What are the advantages and disadvantages of having the HIV test?

You will have information to make informed decisions about your health and that of your unborn child.



Having the test and taking medical precautions early in pregnancy will reduce the chances of your baby becoming HIV infected but does not guarantee that your baby will not be infected. Some women who are infected still have children who are HIV positive even after taking anti-HIV medication, having a cesarian section and bottlefeeding. You need to think about all your options before having an HIV test.

If you find out that you're HIV positive, you'll be offered anti-HIV medicine. The medication can have side effects. You may feel sick or weak for the first few weeks after taking them. Many organizations listed at the back of this booklet can offer support on how to manage these side effects.

## How do I tell my husband or partner that I want to be tested?

Many cultures don't talk about sex or the practice of safer sex. So your partner might think that you don't trust him/her or that maybe s/he can't trust you. If you are concerned about your privacy but still want to get tested, you can go to a clinic that offers anonymous testing. No one will know you've had the test.

An anonymous test won't affect your immigration status (WHIWH has trained counsellors who can advise you about this) or your chances of being able to sponsor family members.

But a positive result will change your relationship with your partner. A counsellor can help you deal with your feelings no matter what the test results.

If you don't feel safe talking to your partner about getting tested, then talk to an HIV counsellor or a trusted friend.



## Can't I just have the test? Why do I have to talk about it?



You don't have to talk about getting tested, but some women find it easier to take the test if they have more information about the disease, its risks and support that may be available.

Many people are afraid to talk about HIV/AIDS because they don't know much about it. Some people think that an HIV positive person has had a lot of sexual partners or is gay. Others think that they can tell if their partner is infected or if they are married they think that there is no risk. If you know the facts about HIV/AIDS you can protect yourself and your baby.

In Ontario, there are organizations, HIV counsellors, health care workers and doctors who can provide you with information so that you can make informed decisions. It is important for you to understand what having the test and the possible results mean.

## **If I test positive, how can I reduce the risk of passing HIV to my baby?**

There are three things that you can do to reduce the risk of HIV being passed to your baby.

1. Take HIV medications to reduce the amount of virus in your blood and lower the risk of the baby getting infected. Your doctor will give you the treatments early in your pregnancy. Your baby will receive HIV medication immediately after birth.
2. Having your baby by cesarian section (a surgical operation) also reduces the risk. This is because the baby will have much less contact with infected blood and vaginal fluids during delivery.
3. Bottle-feed your baby instead of breastfeeding so that the baby does not become infected through your breast milk.



If you find out you are HIV positive, you will have the chance to talk to HIV counsellors and specialists about your concerns. You can also speak to one of the healthcare providers at Women's Health in Women's Hands or contact one of the organizations listed at the back of this booklet.

**Ontario provides free formula for one year for infected mothers.**

## Risks

If you are pregnant then you've been at risk because you have had unprotected sex. The only way that you can be sure that you haven't been exposed to the virus is if you know that you and your partner are HIV negative.


**I had a negative HIV test two years ago. Do I have to have another one?**

As long as neither you nor your partner have been at risk since, and you know for certain that you were both negative at that time, then you are probably not infected. If you're not sure then it's a good idea to have another test.

**I have too many things to worry about. I might have been at risk but I don't want to find out now.**

You may feel as if you have too many things to worry about when you're pregnant. You may have other concerns such as your immigration status, job, housing or money problems which seem more important. Knowing your HIV status can be a relief. If you test HIV negative, it can be reassuring for you.





If your test result is positive it can be difficult and stressful, but the earlier you know the better. There are people who can help you. No matter what happens, you still need to plan for a healthy baby.

## **If I am HIV positive, what are the risks to my baby?**

If you test positive for HIV and don't take any HIV medication, your child has a 30-40% chance of getting HIV. If an HIV positive woman takes anti-HIV medication, has the baby by cesarian section and bottle-feeds instead of breastfeeding, the risk of HIV being passed to your baby is reduced to 1%.

## **When would I know if my baby is infected?**

If you are HIV positive, it takes a while to find out if your baby has the virus. Your doctor will take a sample of the baby's blood and test it to check for HIV antibodies when the baby is born and then at, one, three and six months old. If the baby still tests negative at 18 months then you can be sure the baby is not infected.

## **What about my partner? If I have the test, will we have the same result?**

Your test result is yours alone. If your partner takes the test, s/he may have a different result. Sometimes a woman who tests positive will have a partner who tests negative. In other cases, a woman can test negative and her partner is HIV positive. If your partner wants to take the test, s/he can get tested. It is important for your partner to be tested to ensure that you can take the appropriate precautions to protect your self and your unborn child.



## Will anyone else know my result?

If you go to an **anonymous testing site**, only the health care worker who gives you the test will know the result. ***Remember, your doctor cannot provide anonymous testing.***

## When will I get the result?

Usually, you will get the HIV test result in about two weeks. You cannot get the results over the phone. You must go back to the testing centre. Your doctor or health care provider will let you know when the test results are ready and will book an appointment for you to come in no matter what the results are.

## What about life insurance and mortgages?

You can't get life insurance in Ontario if you are HIV positive. The Canadian Home and Mortgage Corporation (CHMC), an agency that provides mortgage insurance for home buyers, won't approve an HIV infected person for insurance - if they know someone is HIV positive.

## How will HIV affect my immigration status?

A positive HIV test will not affect your immigration status if you are landed or are a Canadian Citizen. But if you hope to apply, or are in the process of applying for permanent resident status, you may be denied based on the HIV test. For more information speak with a counsellor at Women's Health in Women's Hands or an Immigration Lawyer.



## If I'm HIV negative, how can I stay that way?

Using condoms every time you have sex is the best way to protect yourself from getting HIV. You should talk to your partner so that he knows about your concerns and agrees to use condoms or gets tested.

## What if I find out I'm HIV positive? What can I do then?

If you test positive, you'll have a lot of decisions to make. Even if you expected the result, you may feel angry, sad or scared. You may be worried about yourself, your baby and your partner. You can get the support you need through a WHIWH counsellor or one of the organizations listed in this booklet. Remember, there are different kinds of anti-HIV medication you can take to stay healthy and to protect your baby from getting infected. You can talk to your doctor to find out which medicine is best for you.

If you decide to continue your pregnancy, you will be referred to a doctor who specializes in HIV. This doctor will explain the different medicines that you can take to control your HIV and how they work to reduce the risk to your baby - including having your baby by cesarian. Information on all aspects of HIV and pregnancy is provided on the HIV Motherrisk Healthline 1-888-246-5840.

## Dealing with Stress

Finding out that you're HIV positive is stressful, but it's important for you to try to keep yourself as healthy as possible. You may feel as if you're alone, even if you tell someone you trust. You may feel that you have to pretend to your family that you're okay. All these things add to your stress.



### **There are some things you can do to help manage the stress of living with HIV:**

- Exercise (like walking, jogging or bike riding) helps your body deal with stress by boosting your immune system (illness-fighting system)
- Take time to relax through meditation, listening to music or talking to a friend
- Find a support group
- Get plenty of sleep
- Avoid drugs (including caffeine and nicotine) and alcohol because they can weaken your immune system
- Eat healthy foods and avoid junk food or food that has a lot of sugar, white flour or chemicals. See a naturopath or nutritionist for more information.

If you are taking any herbal medicines it is important to let your doctor know. There can be side effects from mixing herbal medicines with anti-HIV medication.

### **Can I have an abortion if I find out I'm HIV positive?**

Yes. Having an abortion is a woman's personal choice. Some women feel that ending their pregnancy is better than dealing with the possibility that their child could be born HIV infected. You may want to take some time to think about your options. Having an abortion can bring up some painful feelings, so you should take the time to talk with a Women's Health in Women's Hands counsellor or your doctor. You also shouldn't feel under any pressure to end your pregnancy or continue it. It's your decision.

If you decide to have an abortion, you'll need to talk to your doctor or a women's health counsellor. In Canada, you can have an abortion up until you are 20 weeks pregnant, so you'll need to decide fairly quickly.

Most women who take an HIV test will have a negative result, but you should be prepared in case you test positive. You can discuss any concerns about HIV and pregnancy with a Women's Health in Women's Hands healthcare provider or contact one of the organizations listed in this booklet.

## Information for Women Who Know They Are HIV Positive

### I know I'm HIV positive and I don't want to infect my partner - can I still have children?

Yes. It's your choice - although you may have to think about other ways of getting pregnant. It's very common for women when they first find out that they're HIV positive to feel that they can't or shouldn't have children. We now know that with available HIV treatments most infected women will not pass the virus to their babies. You can discuss alternative methods of conceiving with a reproductive health counselor or your doctor in order to

ensure that your partner is protected. Many HIV positive women have successfully become pregnant .





## How does HIV affect pregnancy and how does pregnancy affect HIV?

Your periods may not be as regular as they were before you became infected. This could make it more difficult to get pregnant. You can talk to your doctor about this.

Being pregnant shouldn't make your HIV worse. But the virus might make you feel sicker when you're pregnant. It depends on how healthy you are before you get pregnant.

## What happens if I get sick? Who will take care of my baby?

Caring for your child can be tiring when you're well. If you're ill, it can feel even worse. It's a good idea to start planning ahead if you or your partner become ill. You may want to think about any friends or family who can help care for you and your baby. A Women's Health in Women's Hands Counselor will help you look at options especially if you have no family or friends in Canada.

## I know I'm positive - do I have to tell the doctor?

You don't have to tell your doctor your HIV status, but you could be losing a chance to get the best possible care if you don't tell him or her. Most pregnant women are told not to take medication during the first three months of pregnancy. If you're HIV positive, your doctor will recommend that you take medication while pregnant to prevent the virus from passing to your baby. You should avoid certain medical tests like amniocentesis (where a needle is put in the womb to remove fluid from around the baby). This test is sometimes used to make sure that your baby doesn't have any birth defects. If you're HIV positive, it's not a good idea to have this test because the virus could be passed to your baby.



## Giving Birth

Most women will have their babies by vaginal delivery (natural birth). If you're HIV positive, a cesarean section will reduce the risk of HIV being passed to your baby. You have the choice to have a vaginal or cesarean birth. **Get all the facts and risks of both.**

## Is Breastfeeding Best?

We know that breastfeeding is the best way to provide nutrition to babies. But HIV can be passed from mother to baby through breast milk. Your doctor will advise you to bottle-feed your baby. You can get support from hospital staff about bottle-feeding. Free baby formula is provided to all HIV infected mothers for the first year of your baby's life. Call your local hospital or the HIV/AIDS Hotline (listed at the back of the booklet) for more information.

## When is the best time to get pregnant?

The best time is when you are well and you have a low viral load count. Viral load tests measure how much HIV is in your blood. Doctors will do these tests every three months and more frequently if you're pregnant. The higher the viral count, the more HIV is in your blood and taking anti-viral medication should reduce this.

## I'm not taking anti-HIV medication yet - when should I start?

In any pregnancy, women are advised not to take medication during the first three months. HIV positive women are also advised that they shouldn't start taking their anti-viral medication until after the first trimester (three months). You should talk to your doctor about this to be sure that you're getting the best benefit and protecting your unborn child.





## How many anti-HIV medications will I have to take?

That depends on your general health. If you have a high viral count, the specialist may suggest a combination of three or four different anti-HIV medications. If you are in fairly good health, despite being HIV positive, the specialist will probably recommend that you wait until you are about 28 weeks pregnant before taking anti-HIV medication to reduce the risk of the child being infected. Talk to your doctor or HIV counsellor to get a better understanding of your options.

## I am taking HIV medication already and now I'm pregnant. Should I stop taking my medication?




No. You should talk to your doctor first. Your viral count could rise if you suddenly stop taking your anti-HIV medicine. When you're pregnant, you want to keep your viral count down so that you can be as healthy as possible. Taking your anti-viral medication will help. If you feel sick and vomit a lot, talk to your doctor. Your doctor may switch you to a different combination to reduce the side effects.



## Are the anti-HIV medications safe for my baby? What about me?

Little is known about the long term effects of Anti-HIV medication on children and we don't know enough about how anti-HIV medicine affects mothers and their unborn children.



Your doctor will be able to give you more information or you can ask an HIV counsellor at the sexual health clinics listed in this booklet. Most women taking anti-HIV medicine give birth to healthy babies.

## **When will I know if my baby is HIV positive?**

You won't know for sure if your baby is HIV positive until he or she is about 18 months old. After your baby is born, he will have your antibodies, including HIV antibodies, until his immune system is developed. You should have a pretty good idea when your child is six months old. The hospital will take a blood test immediately after your baby is born and then again at six weeks, three months, and six months. If any of the tests come back positive, it means the baby is HIV infected. The doctors will do one more test at about 18 months and then you can be certain.

## **Once the baby is born, will I have to keep taking the anti-HIV medication? What about the baby?**

Most doctors will recommend you keep taking your medication to stay healthy. Some women find it difficult to remember to take their medication at the right time with a new baby around. It's important to take your medication properly, but if you're having trouble you can talk to a health counsellor or your doctor for advice.

You will have to give your baby anti-HIV medication, up to six weeks after birth, even if he or she isn't HIV positive. This will give your baby extra protection from developing the disease.



## If my baby's HIV positive, what will happen?

Your child's doctor (pediatrician) or Children's HIV specialist will suggest that your child start HIV treatment immediately. Many children with HIV are living healthy, happy lives, going to school and leading normal lives like other children their age.

## Will other pregnant women know I'm HIV positive?

No. Some people may ask questions about why you're not breastfeeding or why you had a cesarian. But some women are choosing to bottle feed their babies and have cesarians, even if they're not infected. You don't have to explain your choices to anyone. If you're feeling alone, you can contact support groups for HIV positive mothers. Talking to another HIV positive mother can help you deal with your baby and his or her needs.

It's your right to have the best health possible. Women's Health in Women's Hands is here to ensure that you have accurate information and support so that you can make healthy decisions that are right for you.





## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The organizations listed below offer a wide range of health related services including HIV/AIDS information, HIV counselling and Testing and support and care of those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Some provide free condoms and do needle exchange for IV drug users. You can call the numbers provided to find out more about the service specific services they provide.

### Anonymous Testing Sites:

Bay Centre for Birth Control	(416) 351-3700
Birth Control & STD Information Centre	(416) 789-4541
Centre Medico-social Communautaire	(416) 922-2672
Hassle Free Clinic	women: (416) 922-0566 (416) 922-0603
Health Services for Street Youth	(416) 927-8553
Queen West Community Health Centre	(416) 703-8482 ext. 125
Rexdale Community Health Centre	(416) 744-0066
Toronto Public Health York Office	(416) 394-2826

### AIDS Service Organizations:

African community Health Services	(416) 591-7600
Africans in Partnership Against AIDS	(416) 924-5256
Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention	(416) 977-9955
Street Outreach Services	(416) 926-0744
Teresa Group	(416) 596-7703
Toronto People with AIDS Foundation	(416) 506-1400
Voices of Positive Women	(416) 324-8703

### Community Health Centres:

East End Community Health Centre	(416) 778-5858
Davenport Perth Community Health Centre	(416) 658-6812
Flemingdon Health Centre	(416) 429-4991
Centre Medico Social Communautaire	(416) 922-2672
Lawrence Heights Community Health Centre 1661	(416) 787-
Parkdale Community Health Centre	(416) 537-2455
Planned Parenthood of Toronto	(416) 961-0113
Regent Park Community Health Centre	(416) 364-2261
Women's Health in Women's Hands	(416) 593-7655

### Telephone Information lines:

AIDS Sexual Health InfoLine	(416) 392-2437 or 1-800-668-2437
Mother Risk HIV Healthline, Hospital for Sick Children	1-888-246-5840
STD Hotline	(416) 338-2373
	(after 4:30pm) (416) 392-7411

For services outside Toronto, call the AIDS Sexual Health Infoline no. listed above to inquire for services in your local area.



Written by: Rosemarie Stewart  
Art Design: Rachael Athill  
Photography: Ian Watson

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Women's Health in Women's Hands is a team of health professionals who work from an inclusive, feminist, anti-racist, anti-oppression framework.

We specialize in working with immigrant and refugee women prioritizing those women from the Caribbean, Africa, Latin America and South Asia.

We believe that all women have the right to receive quality healthcare and to make informed choices about their health.

Women's Health in Women's Hands  
2 Carlton Street  
Suite 500  
Toronto, ON  
M5B 1J3

General Info	(416) 593-7655
Clinical Services	(416) 593-1815
Fax	(416) 593-5867
TTY	(416) 593-5835
E-mail	<a href="mailto:whiwh@web.net">whiwh@web.net</a>