



Don't become positive... again

Avoiding Sexual Transmission of "Superinfection"

Can you become re-infected with another strain of HIV if you are already positive? Unfortunately, yes. Safer sex and safer drug use are as important as ever. (This article will talk about safer sex. For information on safer drug use, see Resources at the end of this article.)

Researchers in Montreal have discovered that infection with one strain of HIV does not protect you from becoming infected with another, potentially drug resistant, strain. Becoming re-infected can mean that any treatment (now or in the future) could be affected. Drug-resistant strains of HIV are like a maze: they present obstacles to many different treatment combinations. Finding the right combination to get you out of the maze and on to rebuilding your immune system can be a challenge. Avoiding re-infection (or "superinfection") is a better bet.

So what can you do to protect yourself from re-infection? Make sex as safe as possible.

Making sex as safe as you can includes talking to your sex partners about risks. Body fluids that contain HIV are blood, semen, vaginal secretions, (and breast milk).

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When it comes to sex, HIV usually enters the body through vaginal or anal intercourse, or any activity that can pass these body fluids between people (such as sharing sex toys).

The female condom is a woman-controlled method to protect you from infection and pregnancy. It is inserted into the vagina and stays in place while you have intercourse. It can also be used with sex toys. Female condoms are available at many drugstores and PWN has some samples too.

If you're having vaginal or anal intercourse with a male partner, ask him to use a condom. If he doesn't want to, suggest other lower risk activities- oral sex, or mutual masturbation. If he still insists on intercourse without a condom, and you don't feel you can say no, ask him to pull out before he comes. Although this still puts you at risk (from pre-cum on his penis, which is his body's natural lube), the less semen that stays in your body, the better. If you're using the Pill or Depo Provera as birth control, it will not protect you against HIV re-infection or any other sexually transmitted infection, so you still need to use condoms.

If you're having sex with another woman, safety is still an issue. Any activity that could exchange infected body fluids could spell re-infection. Mutual masturbation? Touch yourself or her only. Sharing dildos? Slip a new condom on for each person. If you are using toys that can't easily be covered, wash them with hot water and soap in between each person's use. For oral sex, cover up with a condom split up the side (or plastic food wrap, in a pinch).

A safety tip for everyone: lube up! Use as much lube as you like, as long as it is water-based. The more slippery the sex, the less likely you will get tiny vaginal or anal tears, which can provide an entry for infection. Using lube with a condom on a male partner: put a drop in the tip of the condom before he puts it on (nice for him). Once it is on, put it on the outside too (nice for you). Lube up a dildo once it has a condom on it. It doesn't mean sex has to be boring; it just has to glide!

Questions about safer drug use?

Call DEYAS 604-685-6561 or BCPWA 1-800-994-2437 (ask for Treatment Information)

On the web: Visit www.catie.ca, then follow this path: Publications, Resources for Specific Communities, Harm Reduction, pre*fix

If you are interested in reading about the Montreal researchers confirming the possibility of re-infection, contact BCPWA (604-893-2200 or 1-800-994-2437). They reprinted it from the AIDS Daily Summaries from the Centre for Disease Control.

Taking a Break Open House

The PWN support group taking a break will be having an open house on October 14th. at 6PM. Come by, meet other women and have some food. Help us design our winter project, which will be a monument to celebrate the strength, hope and power of HIV+ women. Are you handy with a hammer and nails? Please note **November and December** dates for Taking A Break: November 4 and 18; December 2 and 9.

Questions about your diet?

Nicole, the dietician from Loving Spoonful, will be in the food bank the first Tuesday of every month (October 5 and November 2). She'll be here 12-2 to answer your questions.

Sorry we're so late

Our apologies this newsletter is so late. No one has been in the newsletter editor position over the summer. Janet Madsen has now returned from her leave to step back into the role of Newsletter Editor as part of her Communications Coordinator position. It won't be such a wait for the next newsletter!

Way to go, Sheena!

The reason Sheena Sergeant left the role of Communications Coordinator before Janet returned (see above) is because she was hired as the **new Executive Director at YouthCO AIDS Society**. We miss you Sheena, and wish you all the best at YouthCO!

: Do you have a story to share?

: Stories from members remain the favourite thing in the newsletter, and we are always looking for new ones. Janet will do all the necessary editing (and writing, if you prefer to be interviewed). You don't have to use your real name if this is a concern. For more information, please contact Janet by phone 604-692-3009 or e-mail janetm@pwn.bc.ca.

: Taking a break support group : Thursdays, 6 pm

: Call Sangam at 604.692.3006 for information and details.

: Drop-in

: Tuesdays - Fridays

: 11:30 am - 3:30 pm

: Closed September 22 (cheque issue day) and October 27 (cheque issue day).

: PWN grocery

: Tuesdays, 12:00 - 2:00 pm

: There is no pick up on any other day. No grocery the day before cheque issue (Sept 21 and October 26).

: Lunch

: Tuesdays and Thursdays,

: 12:00 - 2:00 pm

: Hot lunches Tuesdays,
: Cold lunches Thursdays ... mmmm.

: Phone reception

: Mondays - Fridays,

: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

: If you reach our voicemail between these hours, we may be in a meeting. Please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible. All messages are kept strictly confidential.

PWN Support Calendar

September- October 2004

monday tuesday wednesday thursday friday

September	20 drop-in closed	21 hot lunch 12-2pm <u>no grocery</u>	22 Cheque issue day Drop-in closed	23 No lunch today	24 drop-in open 11:30 am - 3:30 pm
October	27 drop-in closed	28 hot lunch & food bank 12 - 2 pm	29 drop-in open 11:30 am - 3:30 pm	30 lunch at noon	1 drop-in open 11:30 am - 3:30 pm
	4 drop-in closed	5 hot lunch & food bank 12 - 2 pm Dietician Nicole 12-2	6 drop-in open 11:30 am - 3:30 pm	7 lunch at noon	8 drop-in open 11:30 am - 3:30 pm
	11 PWN Closed Thanks- giving	12 hot lunch & food bank 12 - 2 pm	13 drop-in open 11:30 am - 3:30 pm	14 lunch at noon Support group 6:00	15 drop-in open 11:30 am - 3:30 pm
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The Positive Side
Positive Women's Network

Connecting to Positive Women's Network

in person

#614-1033 Davie Street, Vancouver
(between Burrard and Thurlow)

by mail

1033 Davie Street, Suite 614
Vancouver, BC V6E 1M7

by phone

604.692.3000 (local)
1.866.692.3001 (toll-free in BC)

by fax

604.684.3126

by email

pwn@pwn.bc.ca

online

www.pwn.bc.ca
www.pwn-wave.ca

Positive Women's Network supports women living with HIV/AIDS to make informed choices about their health. We provide safe access to HIV/AIDS-related support, advocacy and education/prevention to women and their communities throughout British Columbia, Canada.

support program

Bronwyn Barrett - Support Program Coordinator-604
Sangam - Support Worker - 604.692.3006 - sangam
Cara Moody - Oak Tree Outreach Worker - 604.692.

communications and education

Janet Madsen - Communications Coordinator-604-6
Jeannie Lowe - Resource Coordinator - 604.692.301
Bronwen Tigar - Young Women's Prevention Coordin

administration

Marcie Summers - Executive Director - 604.692.3010 - marcies@pwn.bc.ca
L' Hirondelle Financial Services - Bookkeeping - 604.692.3000



The information provided herein cannot replace the information provided by a medical professional.

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