Lesson for I Decided to Take the Test

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to

1) Describe the two types of HIV tests available.
2) Explain where teens can get an HIV test and how soon they would know their results.
3) Identify at least two myths about HIV and AIDS commonly held by teens.

TIME NEEDED
50 minutes

MATERIALS
• Copies of “I Decided to Take the Test”—one per student
• Copies of “Resources about HIV/AIDS”—one per student
• Large inflatable beach ball
• Permanent marker
• Internet connection and LCD projector
• One copy of “I Decided to Take the Test: Statements for Rounds 1, 2 & 3”
• One copy of “I Decided to Take the Test: Answer Key for Instructor”
• Small prizes for winning group—optional

PREPARATION
• Using the permanent marker, write the numbers 1 to 10 on the surface of beach ball, so that each number is spaced evenly apart from all others.
• Check to make sure that www.sexetc.org/video/3574 and www.posornot.com are not blocked sites at your school or agency. (If Sexetc.org is blocked, you can access the video at YouTube.com by searching for “Josh Goes for His First HIV Test.”)
• Review the National Institutes of Health’s “HIV Infection and AIDS: An Overview” at the following link to refresh your own knowledge as needed: www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/hivinf.htm.

PROCEDURE
1. Introduce the lesson by explaining to your students that teens often know a lot of information about HIV and AIDS, but may still have questions. Explain that today’s lesson will cover some basic facts about HIV and AIDS with a focus on getting tested. [3 minutes]

2. Distribute copies of the story “I Decided to Take the Test” and read together with your students. Ask for volunteers to read paragraphs aloud as an alternative to reading silently as a group. [5 minutes]
3. Next, explain that you will show a video of the article’s author, Joshua Dickinson, getting HIV tested. Click on the www.sexetc.org/video/3574 link and play the five-minute video for your class. Once the video is finished, ask your students the following discussion questions:

• What did you think about the article and video?
• Why might a person choose not to get tested?
• Does not getting tested for HIV change the results?
• What are the consequences of doing nothing and not getting tested? [10 minutes]

4. Next, divide your students into teams of three so that each team has students who are generally matched in their knowledge about HIV (if possible). Explain that each group will send up one team member to the front of the room to play a round of the game. During each round, the students at the front of the room will form a circle and the beach ball will be gently tossed from one student to the next, making sure that each student has a turn.

Once a student has the beach ball, he or she should call out the number printed on the top of the beach ball. Explain that the student will then be read a true or false statement to test what the student remembers from the article and his or her general knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Explain that each statement corresponds to a number on the ball and, if the student correctly answers whether the statement is true or false, his or her team will earn one point. Then, if the student can correctly explain why the statement is true or false, his or her team will receive an additional point.

Explain that if the student does not answer correctly, there will be no “steals,” allowing the other team to try to get the correct answer. Also, if a person gets a number that has already been used, he or she should call out another number closest to the original. Ask if there are any questions about the directions, and if not, begin. Make sure to keep score during the game. [2 minutes]

5. Have each group send one team member up to the front of the room so that all students form a large circle. Show students the beach ball with the numbers 1 to 10 written on it. Throw the beach ball to a student to begin. When the student calls out the number printed on the top of the ball, read aloud the corresponding statement.

When the student has answered “true” or “false,” and explained why for an additional point, he or she gently throws the ball to another student. Repeat until all ten statements have been read and determined to be true or false. Make sure to keep track of the score. [5 minutes]

6. Have those students return to their seats, and ask the groups to send their next team members to form a circle in the front of the room. Repeat the directions with round two and then again with round three until all statements have been read and students have responded “true” or “false.” Determine which team(s) has the most points and designate a winner. (Facilitator’s Note: If you think it will motivate your students, award prizes to the winning team(s).) [15 minutes]

7. Lastly, explain that you will close the lesson by playing an online “Think You Can Tell if We Have HIV?” game as a group. Click on the Web site Posornot.com. Then click through as many youth profiles as time allows, asking students, by a show of hands, whether they think the teen is HIV infected or not. End the lesson by asking students the following questions:

• What made you decide who is positive or not?
• Was it what they look like, their age or what they do on the weekends that had you decide they were positive or not?

Explain that there is only one way to know if someone is HIV positive or not: taking an HIV test. End by distributing the handout “Resources about HIV/AIDS” to each student. [10 minutes]

Special thanks to Teri Tomatich, M.Ed. for her review of this lesson plan.
I Decided to Take the Test
Statements for Rounds 1, 2 & 3

Round 1

1. You can get results from an HIV test within an hour of taking the test. (TRUE)
2. The only way to get an HIV test is through a blood test. (FALSE)
3. If a teen takes an HIV test at a public clinic, like the health department, his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) will not be notified of the results. (TRUE)
4. If you get infected with HIV, it will show up right away on an HIV test. (FALSE)
5. A teen can get tested for HIV at his or her doctor’s office, Planned Parenthood or the health department. (TRUE)
6. Unprotected sex—meaning oral, anal or vaginal sex—can put you at risk for getting HIV. (TRUE)
7. There is an HIV test that only requires a mouth swab, called OraSure. (TRUE)
8. If you become infected with HIV, you will definitely feel symptoms of being sick. (FALSE)
9. Roughly 10,000 people in the U.S. are HIV positive but do not know it. (FALSE)
10. One of the biggest reasons why people don’t get tested is fear. (TRUE)

Round 2

1. Only gay men or drug users get HIV. (FALSE)
2. In the U.S., more new infections occurred among young people than any other age group. (TRUE)
3. HIV and AIDS are curable. (FALSE)
4. HIV can slip through a latex condom. (FALSE)
5. HIV and AIDS are the same thing. (FALSE)
6. You can get HIV the first time you have sex. (TRUE)
7. You can get HIV from oral sex. (TRUE)
8. There will be a vaccine for HIV in the next two to three years. (FALSE)
9. You can get HIV through casual contact, such as hugging, holding hands or living in the same house as someone who is infected. (FALSE)
10. It is easier for women to get HIV from a man than a man to get HIV from a woman during unprotected sexual intercourse. (TRUE)

Round 3

1. Not having oral, anal or vaginal sex is the safest way to protect yourself from getting HIV through sex. (TRUE)
2. The only way that HIV can get through a latex condom is if the condom breaks. (TRUE)
3. Getting HIV isn’t so serious now because of the different medications you can take. (FALSE)
4. You can get HIV from just one act of unprotected sexual intercourse. (TRUE)
5. Teens can get an HIV test without their parents’ permission. (TRUE)
6. Once you get HIV, you’ll become sick very quickly. (FALSE)
7. HIV can be passed from one person to another through sweat. (FALSE)
8. The four body fluids that can pass HIV from someone who is HIV positive are blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk. (TRUE)
9. HIV is caused by a bacteria. (FALSE)
10. HIV stands for human immunizing virus. (FALSE)
I Decided to Take the Test
Answer Key for Instructor

Round 1
1. TRUE. You can get results from an HIV test within an hour of taking the test.
Rapid response tests can give you results in 20 minutes or fewer and are becoming more widely available.

2. FALSE. The only way to get an HIV test is through a blood test.
In addition to blood tests, OraSure is also available, which just requires a cheek swab sample to test for HIV.

3. TRUE. If a teen takes an HIV test at a public clinic, like the health department, his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) will not be notified of the results.
As long as a teen goes to a publicly funded clinic, like Planned Parenthood or a local health department, his or her results will be confidential. It is only if a teen uses his or her parents’ health insurance that the HIV test may show up on insurance documents.

4. FALSE. If you get infected with HIV, it will show up right away on an HIV test.
The body’s immune system tries to fight off HIV when it is first introduced into the body. It can take between six weeks and three months for a person to sero-convert, meaning there are enough antibodies in a person’s system to show positive on an HIV test. This period is called the “window period,” and a person can still transmit HIV during this period, even though it is too soon to test accurately for HIV.

5. TRUE. Teens can get tested for HIV at their doctors’ offices, local health departments or Planned Parenthood.
Teens can get tested for HIV at many different clinics, adolescent health clinics and hospitals in their communities.

6. TRUE. Unprotected sex—meaning oral, anal or vaginal sex—can put you at risk for getting HIV.
HIV is transmitted from an infected person’s blood, semen, vaginal fluids or breast milk. Any type of sexual behavior that exposes a person to these fluids from an HIV positive person will place him or her at risk for contracting HIV.

7. TRUE. There is an HIV test, called OraSure, that doesn’t involve blood.
OraSure just requires a cheek swab sample to test for HIV.

8. FALSE. If you become infected with HIV, you will feel symptoms of being sick.
Not everyone who gets infected with HIV feels any early symptoms. If a person does experience early symptoms, they often include fever, tiredness, unexplained weight loss and enlarged lymph nodes. These are usually confused with having the flu and therefore often dismissed as being related to HIV.

9. FALSE. Roughly 10,000 people in the U.S. are HIV positive but do not know it.
More than 250,000 people are infected with HIV in the U.S. but do not know they are HIV positive because they have not been tested.

10. TRUE. One of the biggest reasons why people don’t get tested is fear.
Fear of receiving a positive test result, fear of being rejected by family and friends, fear of losing one’s job and fear of death are all powerful reasons why people may decide not to get tested. Unfortunately, this fear also prevents them from accessing potentially life-saving treatment too.
**Round 2**

1. **FALSE. Only gay men or drug users get HIV.**
   According to August 2008 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), men who have sex with men and intravenous drug users make up 65 percent of new infections. High-risk heterosexual contact accounts for nearly a third of all new infections.

2. **TRUE. In the U.S., more new infections occurred among young people than any other age group.**
   According to August 2008 data from the CDC, 34 percent of new infections occurred in people between the ages of 13 to 29.

3. **FALSE. HIV and AIDS are curable.**
   HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. AIDS breaks down the body's immune system, usually to the point where the person cannot fight off other infections, called opportunistic infections, such as certain cancers and pneumonia. At this time, there is no cure for HIV or AIDS.

4. **FALSE. HIV can slip through a latex condom.**
   A condom is made from latex, which is not porous, meaning it does not have holes. Therefore, the only way HIV could get through a latex condom is if the condom breaks.

5. **FALSE. HIV and AIDS are the same thing.**
   HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. A person can be HIV positive and not have developed AIDS. HIV causes AIDS, but they are not the same thing.

6. **TRUE. You can get HIV the first time you have sex.**
   Anytime a person has oral, anal or vaginal sex with a partner who is HIV positive and the partners do not use latex condoms or barriers, HIV can be transmitted—even if it's their first time having sex.

7. **TRUE. You can get HIV from oral sex.**
   While it is possible to get HIV from only having oral sex with a person who is HIV positive, it is less risky than having unprotected anal or vaginal sex.

8. **FALSE. There will be a vaccine for HIV in the next two to three years.**
   Although there is a lot of research being done to create an HIV vaccine, we are still many years away from having a vaccine available.

9. **FALSE. You can get HIV through casual contact, such as hugging, holding hands or living in the same house as someone who is infected.**
   HIV is transmitted via four body fluids—blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk—from one person who is HIV positive to another person. Casual contact does not involve those four body fluids and therefore does not pose a risk for transmission of HIV.

10. **TRUE. It is easier for women to get HIV from a man than a man to get HIV from a woman during unprotected sexual intercourse.**
    The delicate lining inside of a woman’s vagina makes it prone to rip or tear, generally from lack of lubrication. Any break in the membrane provides a direct entryway into the bloodstream for HIV. The skin of the penis is not a mucus membrane and is less likely to break or tear during sexual intercourse. There is also generally a greater concentration of HIV in semen than vaginal fluids.
Round 3
1. TRUE. Not having oral, anal or vaginal sex is the safest way to protect oneself from getting HIV through sex.

If you do not engage in sexual behaviors that expose you to blood, semen, vaginal fluids or breast milk, you eliminate the risk of getting HIV sexually from another person.

2. TRUE. The only way that HIV can get through a latex condom is if the condom breaks.

Latex is not porous, so it can only get through a latex condom if the person breaks the condom during use.

3. FALSE. Getting HIV isn’t so serious now because of the different medications you can take.

Many of the medications can be debilitating and cause serious side effects, such as digestive distress. Additionally, if taken long enough, HIV might mutate and therefore become resistant to medications.

4. TRUE. You can get HIV from just one act of unprotected sexual intercourse.

HIV is transmitted from an infected person’s blood, semen, vaginal fluids or breast milk. Any type of sexual behavior that exposes a person to these fluids can place them at risk for contracting HIV, even through just one act of intercourse.

5. TRUE. Teens can get an HIV test without their parents’ permission.

Teens do not need their parents’ permission to get tested for HIV. Teens can go to a health department, family planning clinic or HIV testing facility to be tested.

6. FALSE. Once you get HIV, you’ll become sick very quickly.

There are many medications available that can keep people infected with HIV healthy for many years. It is rare for a person to become very sick soon after they are infected. Some people who suddenly become ill and have never been tested may not be aware that they were actually living with HIV for many years.

7. FALSE. HIV can be passed from one person to another through sweat.

HIV is only passed through four bodily fluids, and they are blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk. While HIV can be detected in sweat, there is not enough concentration to pass it from one person to another.

8. TRUE. The four body fluids that can pass HIV from someone who is HIV positive are blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk.

This is true. It is possible to detect HIV in other body fluids, but not in enough concentration to transmit it to another person.

9. FALSE. HIV is caused by a bacteria.

HIV is caused by a virus, the human immunodeficiency virus, which is not a bacteria. As a virus, there is no known cure for HIV.

10. FALSE. HIV stands for human immunizing virus.

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus.
**WEB SITES**

**Sex, Etc. from Answer — www.sexetc.org**
Sexetc.org is a Web site by teens, for teens, that features a sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) topic area with stories and Frequently Asked Questions about HIV and AIDS. The site also includes Ask the Experts and a weekly live chat with experts.

**Iwannaknow.org from the American Social Health Association — www.iwannaknow.org**
Iwannaknow.org has answers to your questions about sexual health and STDs, including HIV/AIDS.

**Teenwire from Planned Parenthood Federation of America — www.teenwire.com**
Teenwire.com features an infections and diseases topic area, which includes articles, Ask the Experts, quizzes, games and video.

**National HIV and STD Testing Resources — www.hivtest.org**
HIVtest.org is a service of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that includes information about getting tested for HIV.

**It’s Your (Sex) Life—www.itsyoursexlife.org**
ItsYourSexLife.org is a campaign from MTV’s thinkMTV.com online community to encourage teens and their friends to get informed, get heard and take action on issues of sexual health.

**Does HIV Look Like Me? — www.doeshivlooklikeme.org**
The Does HIV Look Like Me? site consists of videos created by young people living with HIV or AIDS, who are fighting misconceptions, stigma and inequality with their personal stories.

**Pos or Not—Posornot.com**
Posornot.com features a game that challenges your assumptions about what people living with HIV look like. Play the game to see if you can tell who is HIV positive or negative just by looking at their pictures.

**HOTLINES**

**CDC National AIDS Hotline:**
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
(Press 2 when prompted for Spanish hotline.)

**Planned Parenthood:**
1-800-230-PLAN (7526)