

Glossary

HIV AND AIDS

A

acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) the disease that is caused by HIV infection, which weakens the immune system

asymptomatic stage a stage of an infection in which the infectious agent, such as HIV, is present but there are few or no symptoms of the infection

D

drug combination therapy an AIDS treatment program in which patients regularly take more than one drug

H

helper T cell (CD4⁺ cell) white blood cell that activates the immune response and that is the primary target cell of HIV infection

HIV-antibody test a test that detects HIV antibodies to determine if a person has been infected with HIV

HIV positive describes a person who tests positive in two different HIV tests

human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) the virus that primarily infects cells of the immune system and that causes AIDS

O

opportunistic infection (OI) an illness that is due to an organism that causes disease in people with weakened immune systems; commonly found in AIDS patients

P

pandemic a disease that spreads quickly through human populations all over the world

U

universal precautions the set of procedures used to avoid contact with body fluids and to reduce the risk of spreading HIV and other diseases