

HIV/AIDS in Lesotho

HIV/AIDS was first identified in Lesotho in the 1980s and it spread quickly. Lesotho has the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the world. More than 23% of the population are infected—just under one in four people have it. HIV/AIDS has had a devastating effect on the nation. Every Mosotho has either been infected or affected by the disease. The epidemic has had a crippling impact on the economy and social structure of families. Currently, there are nearly 300,000 orphans, the majority of who are AIDS orphans.

HIV/AIDS: What is it?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. This disease breaks down the body's immune system, leaving it vulnerable to even the smallest infections. Many people who have HIV will eventually develop AIDS once their immune system has been seriously damaged. AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

Symptoms

HIV is primarily transmitted through unprotected sex, blood transfusions, sharing needles, and from mother to child during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding. HIV is not transmitted through tears or saliva. It is very difficult to know once you have become infected with HIV. Some people may experience flu like symptoms such as a fever, headaches, stomachaches, or sore muscles.



HIV/AIDS Facts

- In 2009, there were around 23,000 new HIV infections and approximately 14,000 people died from AIDS
- Over half of the 260,000 adults living with HIV are women

Is there a cure?

HIV/AIDS has no cure. However, antiretroviral treatment can slow down the HIV virus. The antiretroviral treatment is expensive and it must be taken when a person is well nourished, otherwise the risk other of side effects greatly increase.

If you think you might be infected with HIV/AIDS, get tested!