

# What is AIDS?



**ACQUIRED** means you developed the disease and were not born with it.



**IMMUNE** means your immune system - your body's ability to protect you from diseases.



**DEFICIENCY** means a weakness in your body's system to fight disease.



**SYNDROME** is a group of health problems that make up a disease.

AIDS is the **most severe phase of HIV infection**. People with AIDS have such badly damaged immune systems that they get an increasing number of severe illnesses, called opportunistic illnesses.

**Common symptoms** of AIDS include chills, fever, sweats, swollen lymph glands, weakness, and weight loss. People are diagnosed with AIDS when their CD4 cell count drops below 200 cells/mm or if they develop certain opportunistic illnesses. People with AIDS can have a high viral load and be very infectious.