

The symptoms of early HIV infection can be:

- Similar to symptoms of common cold or flu viruses.
- Similar to symptoms of other **STI - Sexually Transmitted Infections** and other infections such as “Mono” or **hepatitis**, which are much more commonly and more easily transmitted.

- Rash.
- Headache.
- Swollen lymph nodes.
- Sore throat.
- Weight loss.
- Joint pain.
- Sweating, excessive – night sweats.
- Bacterial pneumonia.
- Prolonged fever.
- Prolonged fatigue.

These symptoms can occur **within days or weeks** of the initial exposure to the virus during a period called **primary or acute HIV infection**.

If you are concerned that you **may have** recently acquired HIV and have symptoms described above, **see a doctor**. A doctor or other health care professional can help determine whether you may be infected with HIV or another infection. If HIV infection is suspected, he or she may perform a **Polymerase Chain Reaction** (commonly called “PCR”) test to determine whether HIV is present in the blood.

Once the primary or acute infection is over, **most people do not experience** any visible symptoms for another

8–10 years

. Left untreated, the immune system becomes increasingly weaker and the disease progresses to AIDS. The next symptoms experienced by individuals infected with the virus are often associated with the “

Opportunistic infections

” that target individuals with AIDS such as **pneumonia, tuberculosis, and toxoplasmosis**.

