

FACT: AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

OPINION: I think AIDS gets more publicity than other sexually transmitted diseases because it has a cool name. You don't see many celebrities wearing ribbons for crabs.

FACT: AIDS is the advanced stage of the disease caused by a virus called HIV.

OPINION: HIV leads to AIDS like Guns N Roses lead to Slash's Snake Pit.

FACT: HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

OPINION: That's a funny name for the largest record store in the world.

FACT: The virus attacks and damages the body's immune and nervous systems.

OPINION: In theory, the immune system should probably be *immune*. But crazy things like that only exist in comic books and rap music.

FACT: Everyone can be affected by HIV/AIDS: Male, female, young, and old.

OPINION: By now it's safe to say that AIDS is bigger than Hulk-a-mania.

FACT: There is no cure for the HIV infection yet.

OPINION: Some people say that laughter is the best medicine, but I bet those people never heard of crab shampoo.

FACT: Prevention is still our only defence.

OPINION: I don't fully trust prevention. Try using prevention to defend yourself from hungry wolverines. Nunchakus are my best defence.

FACT: You can get infected by having unprotected vaginal and/or

anal sex with someone already infected.

OPINION: Is unprotected sex like when you're touching pissers in a car, but you're not wearing a seat-belt? If that's the case, then I'm safe.

FACT: You can get infected by sharing needles for injecting drugs like cocaine, heroin or steroids with someone already infected.

OPINION: I've never been one to share stuff anyway. As a child I'd never let anyone else play with my GI Joes, especially not the neighbourhood crack whore.

FACT: You can get infected by receiving infected blood or blood products (Since November 1985 all blood and blood products are tested for HIV antibodies in Canada).

OPINION: Like our beer, Canada's blood is HIV-free.

FACT: You can get infected during pregnancy, at birth or through breastfeeding. An infected mother can pass the virus to her child.

OPINION: The only thing my mother passed on to me was a hairy chest.

FACT: You can't get infected by casual, everyday contact.

OPINION: But if you're casual, everyday contact involves teasing grizzly bears, you may run into other problems.

FACT: You can't get infected by shaking hands.

OPINION: Just make sure that you don't accidentally shake something else.

FACT: You can't get infected by hugging, kissing.

OPINION: So give me some sugar whenever you see me, toots.

FACT: You can't get infected by coughing, sneezing.

OPINION: But you should NEVER cough or sneeze in public anyway. That's just gross.

FACT: You can't get infected by giving blood.

OPINION: However, it is preferable that you donate blood through a clinic rather than just spraying it at people on the street.

FACT: You can't get infected by using swimming pools, toilet seats.

OPINION: That's good, because I like to go diving for toilet seats down at the old swimming hole.

FACT: You can't get infected by sharing bed linen, eating utensils, or food.

OPINION: Thank god. I'm always lending out my bed linen, eating utensils, and food to

strangers.

FACT: You can't get infected by mosquitos and other insects, animals.

OPINION: But if you insist on having on protected sex with a mosquito, there is a chance that you may get bit.

FACT: You can protect yourself with abstinence.

OPINION: Recommending abstinence is like telling tennis players the safest way to play tennis is by not using your balls.

FACT: Safer sex activities prevent contact with semen, vaginal fluids or blood. Talk to your partner about safer sex before having sex.

OPINION: During sex, talk to your partner about teenage heart-throbs Hanson.

FACT: Use latex condoms correctly every time you have sex.

OPINION: The incorrect way to wear a latex condom can permanently damage your sense of smell.

FACT: Use only water-based lubricants. Oil-based lubricants such as petroleum jelly should never be used because they may weaken the condom and cause it to break.

OPINION: Do not use glue.

FACT: Don't share needles if you are injecting drugs.

OPINION: It's okay to share needles when you're sewing, except with Hazel.

FACT: You can be tested for HIV on PEI by any Island physician.

OPINION: Island physicians typically wear lab coats and work in hospitals. Do not give urine samples to that guy on Queen Street no matter what he tells you.

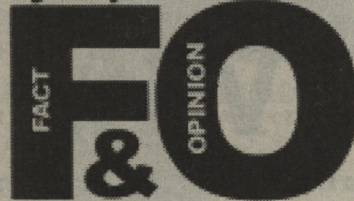
FACT: After infection, people may not feel or look sick for years. However, they can still pass HIV to others.

OPINION: Even the healthiest person is bound to look or feel sick every once in a while. Except Richard Simmons, who always looks like he's prepared to do rigorous exercises at the drop of a hat.

FACT: The people at AIDS PEI Community Support Group asked me to write the AIDS edition of "Fact & Opinion" to promote awareness of the disease.

OPINION: If you are offended by this, complain to them November 29th at the Barn. But if you think AIDS is funny, November 29 at the Barn is going to be hilarious.

By Stephan MacLeod



The AIDS Edition