Why is stopping the spread of HIV important?

Ending the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is very important. Here are a few facts we should be concerned about:

- Over 40 million people worldwide are infected with HIV or living with Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and the numbers continue to rise
- In the Caribbean, HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death in young people
- In Jamaica, the number of persons infected with HIV each year continues to increase and women and young people are increasingly affected.

What is HIV Vaccine Research (also called a trial)?

An HIV vaccine research or trial is a carefully controlled research in which an experimental vaccine is given to people who are followed over a period of time to see how their bodies respond.

Researchers look at how people who receive the experimental vaccine compare with people who receive an inactive substance called a placebo. They want to see whether the experimental vaccine is safe and effective in preventing HIV infection.

HIV experimental vaccines go through many years of testing in the laboratory and in animals before they are approved by the Drug Regulatory Authorities for testing in people.

Why do we need an HIV preventive vaccine?

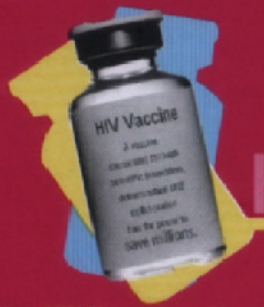
There is NO cure for AIDS. Drugs to treat AIDS are increasingly available and have improved the quality of life of persons living with HIV/AIDS. However, developing a safe, affordable HIV vaccine that wil prevent HIV infections is the "best hope for controlling the AIDS epidemic."

Hope for Controlling the AIDS Epidemic

The HIV vaccine will teach the body's immune system (natural defense against disease) to recognize and protect itself against HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Finding a safe and effective HIV vaccine that will protect people is a long and difficult process, but we can look at the progress made in developing vaccines to control other diseases.

Commonly used vaccines to prevent diseases such as polio, measles, tetanus, mumps, rubella, whopping cough and hepatitis B have saved millions of lives and significantly reduced human suffering.



HIV Vaccine

Why HIV Vaccine research in Jamaica?

- The HIV/AIDS epidemic is increasing in Jamaica
- To see whether the experimental vaccine can work in the Jamaican population
- To join the global effort in helping to find a safe and effective HIV preventive vaccine

Where else are HIV vaccine trials being done?

HIV vaccine trials are being conducted in all continents of the world. However the HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN) sponsor of the trials in Jamaica, has over 25 study sites spread across the United States, South America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.

Who can volunteer for HIV vaccine trials?

You can volunteer to participate in vaccine trials if you are

- Healthy
- HIV negative
- Age between 18 and 60 years
- Willing to spend 12 months or more in a follow-up study