

## Common Retroviruses and Diseases

- HIV

HIV is a lentivirus, a subgroup of exogenous retrovirus, that attacks the immune system and then progresses to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). AIDS, a condition in humans who have progressive failure of the immune system, is the final and most serious stage of HIV disease. It causes severe damage to the immune system.

### Symptoms

Most people who have infected with HIV may not have any symptoms. They may have a flu-like illness within a month or two months after exposure to the virus, with fever, headache, tiredness, and enlarged lymph nodes. After a week to a month, these symptoms usually disappear and are often mistaken for those of other viral infections. During this period, HIV is present in large quantities in blood, semen, and vaginal fluids and people are very infectious. More severe HIV symptoms (such as profound and unexplained fatigue, rapid weight loss, frequent fevers, or profuse night sweats) may not appear for 10 years, or within two years in children born with HIV infection.

