

## HIV stands for....

### **Human**

Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) affects only humans. Related viruses affect other species in similar ways, for example Feline Immuno-deficiency Virus (FIV) that affects cats.

**HIV** needs human cells to thrive and reproduce

### **Immunodeficiency**

HIV weakens the immune system by invading specific healthy white blood cells (also known as T-Cells or CD4 cells), and destroys them in order to reproduce itself. These CD4 cells play a significant role in the way we fight off diseases and infections in our body.

When **HIV** starts reproducing itself in your body, it compromises your immune defenses, making it easier to get sick and harder to recover from diseases.

### **Virus**

A virus is a germ that requires a host cell to survive and reproduce. Viruses are highly adaptable, with the potential of remaining alive in their host cells for long periods of time.

**HIV** is a highly adaptable virus capable of mutating quickly, and may require vigilant attention on the part of the host to keep it in check.

*(Source: HIV – The Basics, AIDS Vancouver)*