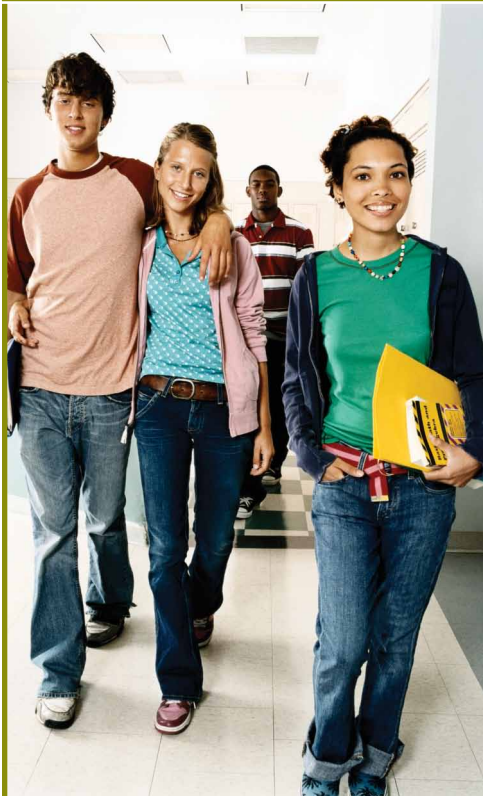


HIV Testing Among Adolescents: What Schools and Education Agencies Can Do



Making HIV testing a routine part of health care for adolescents and adults aged 13–64 years is one of the most important strategies recommended by CDC for reducing the spread of HIV.¹ HIV testing is also an integral part of the *National HIV/AIDS Strategy* to prevent the spread of HIV and improve health outcomes for those who are already infected.² State and local education agencies and schools are essential partners in this effort.

Why HIV Testing Is Important

- More than 1 million persons in the United States are living with HIV infection; of those, one in five do not know they are infected.³
- Learning one's HIV infection status is an important part of prevention. Studies show that people who know they are infected are far less likely to have unprotected sex than those who do not know.⁴
- Early diagnosis of HIV infection and linkage to care enable people to start treatment sooner, leading to better health outcomes and longer lives.

Why HIV Testing Is Important for Adolescents

Adolescents engage in behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infection.

Among U.S. high school students surveyed in 2009⁵—

- 46% have had sexual intercourse at least once.
- 39% of currently sexually active students did not use a condom the last time they had sex.
- 14% have had four or more sex partners.
- 6% had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13.
- 2% have injected illegal drugs at least once.

Many young people are already infected, and the numbers are increasing.

- Approximately 68,600 young people aged 13–24 years were living with HIV infection at the end of 2008; of those, nearly 60% did not know they were infected.³
- In 2009, an estimated 8,300 young people aged 13–24 years^a were newly diagnosed with HIV infection.⁶
- Although overall rates of HIV diagnoses remained stable from 2006 to 2009, HIV diagnosis rates increased for youth aged 15–19 and 20–24 years over the same period.⁶
- HIV infection rates remain disproportionately high among black and Hispanic adolescents and are still increasing among young men who have sex with men.⁷

Because adolescents have the highest rates of many sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), routine testing for other common STDs is also recommended for sexually active adolescents.⁸

^a In the 40 states with confidential, name-based reporting since at least January 2006.

