



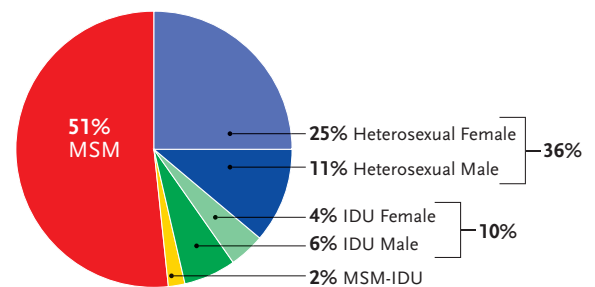
HIV and AIDS among African Americans

HIV is a crisis in African American communities, threatening the health, well-being, and potential of African American men and women across the United States. While prevention efforts have helped to maintain stability in the overall level of HIV infections among African Americans for more than a decade, African Americans continue to face the most severe burden of HIV and AIDS of all racial/ethnic groups in the nation. We cannot allow this crisis to continue.

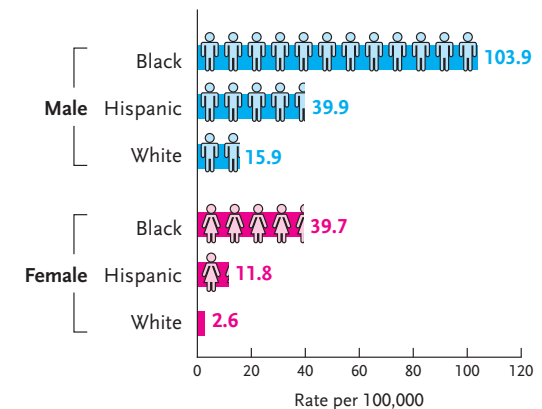
A Snapshot

- ▶ While blacks represent approximately 14 percent of the U.S. population, they account for almost half of people living with HIV in the U.S. (46 percent, or an estimated 545,000 persons), as well as nearly half of new infections each year (44 percent, or an estimated 21,200 infections).
- ▶ Approximately one in 16 black men will be diagnosed with HIV during their lifetime, as will one in 32 black women.
- ▶ Among blacks, men account for 70 percent of new HIV infections. Women account for 30 percent.
- ▶ An analysis by the Black AIDS Institute found that if black America were its own country, it would rank 16th in the world in the number of people with HIV — ahead of Ethiopia, Botswana, and Haiti.
- ▶ Within the African American community, gay and bisexual men are the most affected, followed by heterosexual women.
 - Black men account for almost one-third (31 percent) of all new HIV infections in the U.S. The rate of new HIV infections for black men is more than six times as high as the rate among white men, nearly three times that of Hispanic men and black women. Among black men, the majority of new infections occur among men who have sex with men (MSM).¹
 - Recent CDC data showed an alarming 48 percent increase in new HIV infections among young, black MSM 13 to 29 years old from 2006 to 2009. More new infections occur among young black MSM than white MSM aged 13 to 29 and 30 to 39 combined (6,400).
 - In a study of 21 major U.S. cities in 2008, almost a third (28 percent) of black MSM were infected — nearly twice the percentage of white MSM. Among the black MSM who were HIV-infected, nearly 6 out of 10 (59 percent) were unaware that they were infected.
 - Black women, the majority of whom are infected through heterosexual contact, are far more affected by HIV than women of other races. In fact, black women account for 57 percent of all new HIV infections among women.

Estimated New HIV Infections among Blacks, 2009, by Transmission Category



Estimated Rate of New HIV Infections, 2009, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity



¹ The term men who have sex with men is used in CDC surveillance systems. It indicates the behaviors that transmit HIV infection, rather than how individuals self-identify in terms of their sexuality.



The rate of new HIV infections for black women is more than 15 times as high as that of white women, and more than three times as high as that of Hispanic women.

- ▶ AIDS continues to claim the lives of too many African American men and women. Since the beginning of the epidemic, more than 240,000 blacks with AIDS have died and, according to the most recent published data, AIDS is the third leading cause of death among black women and men aged 35 to 44.

Complex Factors Increase Risk

- ▶ **High prevalence of HIV:** African Americans face a higher risk of being exposed to HIV infection with each sexual encounter than do other racial/ethnic groups. This is because the burden of HIV is greater in African American communities than in any other racial/ethnic group, and because African Americans are more likely to have sexual relations with other African Americans. Therefore, even with levels of individual risk behaviors (e.g., unprotected sex, multiple partners) that are comparable to other races/ethnicities, African Americans face a higher risk of infection.
- ▶ **Higher prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs):** Data also show that the burden of STDs is higher in African Americans than in any other racial/ethnic group. Because STDs can place individuals at higher risk for HIV infection, higher STD prevalence may contribute to higher HIV incidence among black men and women.
- ▶ **Stigma:** The stigma associated with HIV and homosexuality may help to spread HIV in African American communities. Fear of disclosing risk behavior or sexual orientation may prevent African Americans from seeking testing, prevention and treatment services, and support from friends and family. As a result, too many African Americans lack critical information about how to prevent infection.
- ▶ **Socioeconomic factors:** The social and economic realities of some African Americans' lives can increase HIV risk. These include higher levels of poverty, racial discrimination, lack of access to healthcare, and higher rates of incarceration which disrupt social and sexual networks. Studies have shown, for example, that poverty is associated with a higher risk of HIV infection among African Americans, even among those who do not have high-risk behaviors.

HIV: Protect Yourself

Be smart about HIV. Here's what you can do to reduce your risk of infection:

Get the facts — Arm yourself with basic information: Are you at risk? How is HIV spread? How can you protect yourself?

Take control — You have the facts; now protect yourself and your loved ones. There are three essential ways to reduce your risk:

1. Don't have sex (i.e., anal, vaginal or oral)
2. Only have sex (i.e., anal, vaginal or oral) if you're in a mutually monogamous relationship with a partner you know is not infected
3. Use a condom every time you have anal, vaginal or oral sex. (Correct and consistent use of the male latex condom is highly effective in reducing HIV transmission.)

Put yourself to the test — Knowing your HIV status is a critical step toward stopping HIV transmission, because if you know you are infected, you can take steps to protect your

partners. Also, if you are infected, the sooner you find out, the sooner you can receive life-extending treatment. In fact, CDC recommends that all adults and adolescents be tested for HIV. Because other STDs can play a role in the acquisition of HIV, knowing whether you are infected with either is critical in reducing your risk for infection.

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit www.hivtest.org to find HIV and STD testing locations near you.

Start talking — Talk to everyone you know about HIV — friends and family, coworkers and neighbors, at work and at places of worship. Have ongoing and open discussions with your partners about HIV testing and risk behaviors. Talking openly about HIV can reduce the stigma that keeps too many from seeking the testing, prevention and treatment services, and support they need.

HIV doesn't have to become part of your life. Each of us can and must be part of the solution.

Visit www.actagainstaids.org for more information about HIV and what you can do to stop HIV.

If you are a member of the news media and need more information, please visit www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/Newsroom or contact the News Media Line at CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (404-639-8895 or NCHHSTPMediaTeam@cdc.gov).