

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



Routine HIV testing for adolescents and adults aged 13–64 years is one of the most important strategies CDC recommends 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 Because youth spend a significant part of their day in school, education agencies and schools can play key roles in supporting HIV testing.

Why HIV Testing Is Important for Adolescents

Many young people in the United States remain at risk for HIV infection. In 2010,

- Youth aged 13–24 years accounted for 7% of the estimated 1.1 million persons living with HIV infection.
- 26% (about 1 in 4) of the estimated 47,500 new HIV infections were among youth aged 13–24 years: 57% among blacks/African Americans, 20% among Hispanics/Latinos,* and 20% among whites.³



Adolescents engage in behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infection. Among U.S. high school students in 2013,⁴

- 47% have had sexual intercourse at least once.
- 34% are currently sexually active.
- 41% of currently sexually active students did not use a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse.
- 15% have had four or more sex partners.
- 6% had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13.

Knowing one's HIV status is one of the most important parts 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.⁵ Early diagnosis of HIV infection and linkage to care enable people to start treatment sooner, leading to better health outcomes and longer lives, and reducing the risk of spreading HIV to others.

CDC recommends routine HIV testing for adolescents and adults, with repeat testing at least annually for those at higher risk.¹

*Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race.

HIV Testing Resources

Get the facts about HIV and STD testing. Find out more at—

- CDC HIV Testing:
www.cdc.gov/hiv/testing/index.html
- Evidence-Based HIV Prevention Interventions:
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/adolescenthealth/registries.htm>
- National HIV and STD Testing Resources, a searchable database of testing sites by city, state, and ZIP code:
www.hivtest.org
- Adolescent AIDS Program information about youth-friendly HIV testing, counseling, and care:
www.adolescentaids.org
- Get Yourself Tested Campaign:
www.cdcnpin.org/stdawareness/GYT.aspx



Talking about HIV testing is beneficial to students.

References

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