HIV and Youth

OF THE 39,782 HIV DIAGNOSES IN 2016:

8,451 WERE AMONG YOUTH AGE 13 - 24
6,848 WERE AMONG YOUNG GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN
4 OUT OF 5 YOUTH DIAGNOSED WITH HIV WERE AGE 20 - 24

21% OF ALL NEW HIV DIAGNOSES IN THE US WERE AMONG YOUTH

HIV Diagnoses Among Youth in the United States, by Race/Ethnicity and Sex, 2016

From 2011 to 2015, HIV diagnoses among youth remained stable overall.***

remained stable among young African American and white gay and bisexual men
increased 19% among young Hispanic/Latino gay and bisexual men
fell 25% among young women
remained stable among young people who inject drugs

* Unless otherwise noted, people aged 13 to 24 are referred to as youth or young in this fact sheet.
** Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race.
*** From 2010 to 2015, new HIV infections (incidence) fell 24% among youth. Incidence data includes the number of people who get HIV (both diagnosed and undiagnosed) each year. Diagnosis data includes the number of people receiving an HIV diagnosis each year (regardless of the year they were infected). In general, any difference between an incidence trend and a diagnosis trend can be attributed to HIV testing and diagnosis.
Around 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the US. People living with HIV need to know their HIV status so they can take medicine to treat HIV. Taking HIV medicine as prescribed can make the level of virus in their body very low (called viral suppression) or even undetectable. A person living with HIV who gets and stays virally suppressed or undetectable can stay healthy and has effectively no risk of sexually transmitting HIV to HIV-negative partners.

Unfortunately, thousands of Americans still die each year from HIV. In 2015, 100 youth aged 15 to 24 died from HIV disease.

What places some young people at higher risk?

- Many students are not getting the sexual health education they need, and sex education is not starting early enough.
- Certain risk behaviors put youth at higher risk for HIV, including low HIV testing rates, substance use, low rates of condom use, and multiple sex partners. Research has also shown that young gay and bisexual men who have sex with older partners are at a greater risk for HIV infection.
- Youth aged 20 to 24, especially youth of color, have some of the highest STD rates. Having another STD can significantly increase a person’s chance of getting or transmitting HIV.
- Many young people avoid talking about HIV with their sex partners.
- Stigma, fear, homophobia, isolation, and lack of support may also place many youth at higher risk for HIV.

How is CDC making a difference?

- Collecting and analyzing data and monitoring HIV trends among youth.
- Conducting prevention research and providing guidance to those working in HIV prevention.
- Supporting health departments, education agencies, and community organizations by funding HIV prevention work for youth and providing technical assistance.
- Promoting testing, prevention, and treatment through campaigns like Act Against AIDS.

Visit www.cdc.gov/hiv and www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth for more information about CDC’s HIV prevention activities among youth.

HIV IS A VIRUS THAT ATTACKS THE BODY’S IMMUNE SYSTEM.

It is usually spread by anal or vaginal sex or sharing needles with a person who is living with HIV. The only way to know you have HIV is to be tested. Everyone aged 13-64 should be tested at least once, and people at high risk should be tested at least once a year. Ask your doctor, or visit gettested.cdc.gov to find a testing site. Without treatment, HIV can make a person very sick or may even cause death. If you are living with HIV, start treatment as soon as possible to stay healthy and help protect your partners.

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
Visit www.cdc.gov/hiv

Reduce Your Risk

- Not having sex
- Using condoms
- Not sharing needles
- Taking medicine to prevent or treat HIV

For More Information

All content is based on the most recent data available in April 2018.