



FACT SHEET ABOUT HIV/AIDS

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HIV/AIDS...

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that can lead to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).
- HIV is transmitted through **blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk.**ⁱ
- HIV progresses to AIDS with the presence of certain opportunistic infections (infections that take advantage of a weakened immune system), certain cancers, or a CD4/T-cell count of fewer than 200 cells per cubic millimeter.^{ii,iii}
- **Knowing your status** through frequent testing is a vital way to help lower the transmission of HIV.³
- While there is currently **no cure for HIV**, **early medical care and treatment** have the greatest effect on **prolonging life** and lowering the risk of infecting others.ⁱⁱⁱ

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT WHO IS AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS...

- **One in four** HIV-positive people in the United States are **women.**^{iv}
- An estimated **1.1 million people** are living with HIV in the United States.^v
- Of those living with HIV, almost **one in six (15.8%) are unaware of their infection.**^{iv}
- **African Americans** are the most affected racial/ethnic population.^{iv}
- **Men who have sex with men (MSM)** are the most affected populations across all races/ethnicities.^{iv}

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT RISK FACTORS FOR HIV/AIDS...

- **Heterosexual sexual contact** is the most common method of contracting HIV among women (84%), followed by sharing contaminated prep and needle supplies in **injection drug use** (16%).^{iv}
- **Perinatal transmission** – transmission from mother to child during pregnancy, labor and delivery, or breastfeeding – is the most common way for children to contract HIV.^{vi}
- **Drugs and alcohol**, which lower inhibitions, create risk factors for HIV transmission by encouraging high-risk sexual behaviors.^{vii}
- HIV is also transmitted directly through the **sharing of contaminated needles** in injection drug use, body piercing, and tattoos.^v

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Find more information in the **Positively Safe Toolkit, HIV/AIDS Resource Guide and DV Resource Guide**, on HIV/AIDS and domestic violence.

ⁱ Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, How HIV is Spread. <http://www.womenshealth.gov/hiv-aids/what-is-hiv-aids/how-hiv-is-spread.html#a>

ⁱⁱ AIDS.gov, CD4 Count. <http://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/just-diagnosed-with-hiv-aids/understand-your-test-results/cd4-count/>



Positively *Safe*:

THE INTERSECTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & HIV/AIDS

iii AIDS.gov, What is HIV/AIDS. <http://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/what-is-hiv-aids/>

iv Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HIV Among Women.

[http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/gender/women/facts/index.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+pkids+hivnews+\(PKIDS%27+HIV%2FAIDS+News](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/gender/women/facts/index.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+pkids+hivnews+(PKIDS%27+HIV%2FAIDS+News)

v Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HIV in the United States: At a Glance.

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/basics/ataglance.html>

vi Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pregnant Women, Infants and Children.

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/gender/pregnantwomen/>

vii Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HIV and Substance Use in the United States.

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/behavior/substanceuse.html>