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.\(^1\)
- 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.\(^2,3\)
- **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.\(^3\)

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

- **One in four** HIV-positive people in the United States are women.\(^4\)
- An estimated **1.1 million people** are living with HIV in the United States.\(^5\)
- Of those living with HIV, almost **one in six (15.8%) are unaware of their infection**.\(^4\)
- **African Americans** are the most affected racial/ethnic population.\(^4\)
- **Men who have sex with men** (MSM) are the most affected populations across all races/ethnicities.\(^4\)

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%).\(^6\)
- **Perinatal transmission** – transmission from mother to child during pregnancy, labor and delivery, or breastfeeding – is the most common way for children to contract HIV.\(^6\)
- **Drugs and alcohol**, which lower inhibitions, create risk factors for HIV transmission by encouraging high-risk sexual behaviors.\(^7\)
- HIV is also transmitted directly through the **sharing of contaminated needles** in injection drug use, body piercing, and tattoos.\(^8\)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:


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