



Let's Talk About It! Youth & HIV in America

Saving a Generation

by The Balm In Gilead

Today in the United States HIV continues to remain a major problem. The disparities seen within African-American and minority communities is a full-blown epidemic. Unfortunately this crisis is now threatening the future of our children and young people.

Advances in technology, changes in culture, family structures, and society are all contributing factors and influencers in the lives of today's youth that can impact their sexual behaviors and risks for becoming infected with HIV.

By the Numbers:

- 1 in 4 of all new HIV infections occurs in youth ages 13-24

- 4 out of 5 new infections in youth occurs in males
- About 60% of youth with HIV are unaware they are infected
- More new infections were found among young African-American males than in any other youth group by race/ethnicity and gender

We Need an Action Plan

In order to address this growing issue in our families, schools, and communities we need to:

- Get educated on the facts about HIV to understand risk and social factors that impact those risks
- Get educated on prevention strategies and resources

- Engage our communities to combat stigma and discrimination that prevent young people, especially young gay/bi-sexual youth from participating in prevention and treatment programs.





So what is Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)?

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis or PrEP is one of the newest tools being promoted and used to help prevent the transmission of HIV infection.

PrEP is recommended by CDC as an effective prevention strategy. It uses an FDA approved HIV medication called Truvada, which is already being used to help treat persons who are HIV positive.

PrEP has been tested in large studies that included high risk groups of men and women. The studies have shown that PrEP helped to **reduce the risk of HIV infection by up to 90%**

Who should consider PrEP?

You should consider PrEP if you have sex without using a condom, especially if you have a sex partner who you know has HIV infection. This is helpful in persons who are having unprotected sex and don't know whether your partner has HIV infection but is engaging in high risk behaviors like having other male and/or female partners, or using injection drugs.

What to Know about Getting Started w/PrEP?

Start by talking to your doctor or a healthcare provider about your risk and the benefits of PrEP for you.



Also discuss your plans with your partner and family.

Taking PrEP requires a major commitment to not only taking medication daily, but also with seeing your doctor on regular follow-ups.

You also have to consider the cost associated with PrEP and discuss your options with your provider.

Using condoms and practicing other risk reduction behaviors are also a part of PrEP to help ensure maximum effectiveness.

More Information and Resources:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/pdf/2015-11-24-vitalsigns.pdf>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=Jay1yWSiXE8

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/prep/index.html>

Youth Risk Behaviors

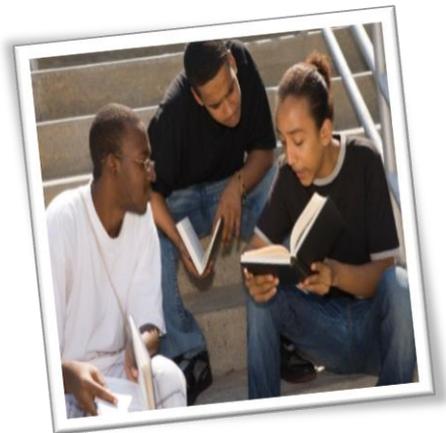
INFLUENCING FACTORS

- The risk for HIV for young people begins when they start having sex or injecting drugs.
- For both males and females, having sex under the influence of drugs or alcohol can increase risky behaviors that could lead to becoming infected with HIV.
- In communities of color where there is already a higher percentage of people that have HIV, the risk for getting HIV is higher because partners are more likely to be infected.

- African Americans have a greater burden of HIV than other racial or ethnic groups in the US so are youth have higher risks than other young people
- Gay and bisexual men are 40 times more likely to have HIV than other men. Research has shown that young gay and bisexual males who have sex with older partners are at a greater risk for HIV infection. This is because an

older partner is more likely to have had more sexual partners or other risks, and is more likely to be infected with HIV.

- Less than half (44%) of gay and bisexual males in high school used condoms the last time they had sex.



Quick Fact:

60%

More than 60% of African-American female high school students are sexually active, with 14% of them **having sex before the age of 13!!!**

24%

Nearly 24% of African-American and Hispanic female teen girls combined have been forced to have sex in their lifetime.



Parents are a Key Part in the fight against HIV and Youth

- Talk with your teens and others in your community about what is going in their lives both physically and emotionally.
- Nearly 30% of high school females admit that they have feelings of sadness and hopelessness.
- Pregnancy prevention messages should also include messages about HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, risks for young people, and where to get tested if they are sexually active. Among sexually active teens some form of birth control is used, but only 8% use birth control along with condoms.

Are We Close to a Cure: Research for AIDS Vaccine



Vaccines have been the gold standard and our best defense against infectious diseases. Modern medicine and science has helped to eradicate many diseases like smallpox and yellow fever, and even made significant strides in curing a variety of cancers. But what about AIDS?

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV, the virus that caused AIDS is a complicated virus that attacks the body's immune system. Research has struggled to identify a potential vaccine in part due to the way in which the virus mutates and reacts within our bodies. There are challenges with understanding the immune response required to prevent HIV infection and those needed to control the replication of the virus once it enters our bodies.

HIV Vaccine Trials

The first trial for a HIV vaccine took place in 1987 using 138 healthy uninfected persons. This trial yielded little outcomes and phase II of the trial was launched in 1992 that added risk behavior factors to its parameters for study participants. By 2004 thousands of individuals were participating in clinical vaccine trials around the world through the HIV Vaccine Trials Network. Through this period there has been no evidence of protection against HIV found among participants.

It wasn't until 2009 that some minor breakthroughs were found from a clinical trial conducted in Thailand using a "prime boost" vaccine. This led to the discovery of (2) potent antibodies that can prevent most strains of HIV in 2010.

To date clinical trials based on the foundation of earlier successes and failures are being conducted in a hope to find a cure for AIDS.



Challenges and Opportunities

There is much more work needed to move us closer to a cure and a vaccine for HIV, however the challenges also present opportunities. Particularly for African-Americans and other communities most impacted by HIV/AIDS. More education is needed around HIV/AIDS research and the importance of having people of color included in both the scientific, biomedical, and behavioral research that is currently being conducted.

To find out more about how you can learn about the advanced in HIV/AIDS Research, clinical trials, and how you can join in the fight visit:

<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/hivaids/research/pages/default.aspx?wt.ac=bcNIAIDTopicsHIVAIDSResearch>