

A publication of the
Pinellas County Health Department

Take the Test, Take Control

June 27 is National HIV Testing Day

National HIV Testing Day, now in its tenth year, is a campaign to remind and encourage those **at-risk** to receive voluntary HIV counseling and testing.

Who's At Risk?

African-Americans have been most disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. While African-Americans represent 12% of the U.S. population, they account for more than half (54%) of the new HIV infections each year in the U.S.

Latino populations continue to be adversely affected by HIV/AIDS. Latinos represent 14% of the U.S. population, but they account for 19% of the new HIV infections each year.

Men who have sex with men (MSM) account for 42% of all new HIV infections, even as the infection rate has declined since the early years of the epidemic. Younger MSM are at particularly high risk, and minority MSM now account for a majority of AIDS cases reported among MSM.

The impact of AIDS on **women** is growing rapidly; women accounted for only 7% of new AIDS cases in 1986 compared to 25% in 2002.

At least half of people becoming infected with HIV infections each year are **youth** - those under the age of 25.



Most young people are infected through sex. Youth at risk for HIV include young people of all races/ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations and other factors. Large numbers of HIV-positive young people have never

been tested and are unaware of their status.

Test Your Knowledge

How much do you know about HIV testing? Take this "True/False" quiz, provided by the **National Association of People with AIDS**, and find out:

People often decide to get tested for HIV because they're worried about a recent behavior that may have put them at risk. True. Recent exposure is one of the main reasons people why people get tested. They also get tested to protect the health of others and to get rid of worrying about "not knowing."



The HIV test identifies whether HIV is present in a person's body. False. The test shows if your body has made a protein (antibody) in response to HIV. It can take a few weeks to a few months after HIV enters your body for there to be enough of these proteins for the test to find. If you have antibodies to HIV, it could mean that you have been infected with HIV.

Having symptoms like night sweats and weight loss might mean I'm infected with HIV. True. These symptoms can also be caused by other conditions and should be checked out by your healthcare provider. The only way to know if you are infected is to be

tested. People who are infected with HIV often don't have any symptoms at all for years. So don't wait, wonder and worry — get tested.

My partner tested negative, so that means I'm not infected. False. Your partner's test doesn't tell if YOU are infected with HIV. The only way to know your HIV status is to have your own test.

If I have unprotected sex, I should be tested for HIV. True. HIV testing is

recommended for people who have had unprotected (didn't use a condom) anal, vaginal or oral sex. HIV testing is also recommended for people who:

- ◆ Have tuberculosis (TB);
- ◆ Have a sexually transmitted disease (STD) like gonorrhea or syphilis;
- ◆ Attend a drug treatment clinic;
- ◆ Have had multiple partners and had unprotected sex;
- ◆ Are partners of injection drug users;
- ◆ Are considering marriage.
- ◆ Are thinking of having a child;
- ◆ Received blood transfusions between 1978 and 1985 (before the blood supply was routinely tested for HIV);

For more information about HIV/AIDS, visit www.napwa.org or www.cdc.gov for information about HIV testing and counseling services, please call us at (727) 824-6900 or visit our website at www.pinellashealth.com.



Our Vision

**Healthier
People in a
Healthier
Environment**

Pinellas County Health Department



This year, Men's Health Week is celebrated June 13 through June 19. The purpose of Men's Health Week is to heighten awareness of preventable health problems and encourage **early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys.**

According to the Men's Health Network, **men die at higher rates than women from the top causes of death** - heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, accidents, pneumonia and influenza, diabetes, suicide, kidney disease, and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis. **Men also die younger than women.** In 1920, women outlived men only by one year. Today, the life expectancy gap has widened: On average, women survive men by six years. Many of the top causes of death are preventable, and can be treated, if found early.

Although **heart disease** is the leading killer of both men and women, almost twice as many males die of conditions that affect the cardiovascular system. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), one in four men has some form of heart disease. It is the leading cause of death. According to the American Heart Association, risk factors for heart disease include:

- **Increasing age**
- **Male sex**
- **Smoking**



- **High blood cholesterol**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Physical inactivity**
- **Obesity & overweight**
- **Diabetes**
- **Family history and race.** Those with family history of the disease have greater risk. So do African-Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and some Asian Americans.

Some things, such as your age and sex, obviously cannot be controlled, but modifying your lifestyle to eat right and exercise can reduce your risk of heart disease

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer of both men and women, claiming more lives than prostate, colon, and breast cancer combined. Tobacco products are responsible for 90% of lung cancer. *Quitting smoking now greatly reduces your risk of lung cancer.*

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer found in men. It's the second leading type of cancer death in men, after lung cancer. Yet the disease is treatable if found in early stages. This can be a challenge, since prostate cancer



can show no symptoms until it has spread to other parts of the body. The American Cancer Society recommends an annual digital rectal exam and a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test for healthy men 50 years or older. Men who have family history of prostate cancer or who are African-American may want to ask their doctor about earlier testing.



Stroke is the third leading killer in the country, after heart disease and all forms of cancer. The incidence rate of stroke is greater in men than in women, although there is really no difference between the sexes as people get older, according to the American Stroke Association. In many ways, behaviors that can reduce the risk of stroke mirror those that can reduce risk of heart disease.

Men are four times more likely to commit **suicide** compared to women, reports the Mens Health Network, which attributes part of the blame **on under-diagnosed depression** in men. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, more than 6 million men have depression each year. Experts believe the number of males with depression could be even greater since men may show signs of depression in a manner different from many women. Instead of sadness, experts say, depression may play out in the following ways in men:

- ◆ **Aggression**
- ◆ **Work "burnout"**
- ◆ **Risk-taking behavior**
- ◆ **Midlife crisis**
- ◆ **Alcohol and substance abuse**
- ◆ **Anger**

To help men with depression and to reduce the risk of suicide, doctors, loved ones, and men themselves need to recognize that society's model of masculinity -- to ignore pain --can work against men

Many diseases and health conditions can be prevented by reducing risk factors. Be aware, and do your part to live a healthier lifestyle.

For information about a June 16 event featuring Emory University Professor John Bonhomme, M.D.,M.P.H., Founder of the National Black Men's Health Network, call our Men's Health Services program at (727) 462-MALE (6253). For men's health information and services, call us or visit menshealthnetwork.org



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