

# Public Health, Epidemiology and Prevention

# PEP Talk

Pinellas County Health Department • February 2007

## *National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day*

## Get Educated, Get Tested, Get Involved

**HIV/AIDS is the #1 cause of death in Florida among black males and black females age 25 to 44.** In Pinellas County in 2005, one in 439 whites was living with HIV/AIDS, while **one in 98 blacks** was living with HIV/AIDS.

African Americans comprise 13 percent of the U.S. population, yet account for almost half of AIDS cases. To call attention to this crisis in the black community, the Pinellas County Health Department joins groups nationwide in observing National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, February 7. This mobilization encourages African Americans to **get educated, get tested, get involved and get treated** for HIV/AIDS, as it continues to devastate black communities.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to be a crisis for African Americans. African Americans make up about 13 percent of the U.S. population. However, this group accounted for **50 percent** of the estimated new HIV/AIDS diagnoses in 2004. Of the estimated 145 infants perinatally infected with HIV, 73 percent were African American.

The primary mode of HIV transmission among African American men is sexual contact with other men (MSM), followed by heterosexual contact and injection drug use. The primary mode of HIV transmission among African American women is heterosexual contact, followed by injection drug use.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, African Americans have accounted for 379,278 (40%) of the estimated 944,306 AIDS cases diagnosed. From the beginning of the epidemic through December 2004, an estimated 201,045 African Americans with AIDS died.

### **RISK FACTORS:**

Race and ethnicity, on their own, are not risk factors for HIV infection. However, African Americans are more likely to face challenges associated with risk for HIV

infection, including:

**Sexual Risk Factors** – African American women are most likely to be infected with HIV as a result of sex with men. They may not be aware of their male partners' possible risks for HIV infection, such as

unprotected sex with multiple partners, bisexuality or injection drug use.

### **Lack of Awareness of HIV**

**Serostatus** – Not knowing your HIV status is risky for everyone. Knowing your status is the only



way you can get treated.

**Substance Use** – Injection drug use is the 2nd leading cause of HIV infection for African American women and the 3rd leading cause of HIV infection for African American men. Besides the risk from sharing needles, substance users are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors, such as unprotected sex, when they're under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

**Sexually Transmitted Diseases** – African Americans have the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Partly because of physical changes caused by STDs, certain STDs can increase your chances of contracting HIV three- to five-fold.

**Denial** – Studies show that a large number of African American MSM identify themselves as heterosexual. As a result, they may not relate to prevention messages geared towards men who identify themselves as homosexual, thinking: "This doesn't apply to me."

**Socioeconomic Issues** – In 1999, nearly 1 in 4 African Americans was living in poverty. The problems associated with poverty, including limited access to quality health care and HIV prevention education, increase HIV risk.

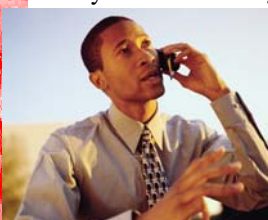
It's not all bad news. The yearly number of new HIV infections in the U.S. has decreased from more than 150,000 in the mid-1980s, and has stabilized since the late 1990s at approximately 40,000. This is still too high. And

minority races and ethnicities are still disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic.

**Do your part - GET TESTED. GET TESTED. GET INVOLVED.**

**It could save your life.**

For more information, please call 824-6903 or 824-6996



# Child Passenger Safety Week: Feb. 11- 17

## If they're under 4' 9", they need a booster seat

Proper use of child restraints has saved 7,500 lives over the past 20 years. Still, **motor vehicle crashes are the #1 killer of children ages 4 to 14 in the U.S and in Florida.**

The reason? Too often it is the improper use or non-use of child safety seats and booster seats.

That's why the Pinellas County Health Department is



joining with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and other groups to commemorate **Child Passenger Safety Week – February 11-17.**

In 2005, an average of five children ages 14 and younger were killed and 640 were injured in motor vehicle crashes **every single day.** That's why it's so important – during Child Passenger Safety Week and throughout the year – for parents and caregivers to really understand the importance of restraining their children properly in their vehicles.

While most young children regularly ride in car seats or booster seats, not enough children ages four through seven are restrained **properly** for their size and age. As children grow, how they need to be secured in a car, truck, van or SUV changes.

For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers simply need to remember and follow the

### 4 Steps for Kids:

- 1) For the best possible protection **keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats**, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until a minimum of age one and at least 20 pounds;
- 2) When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at a minimum age one and at least 20 pounds) they should ride in **forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat**, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds);
- 3) Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in **booster seats in the back seat** until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the child's upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall);
- 4) When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall) they can use the **adult seat belt in the back seat**, if it fits properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt across the chest).



Parents, grandparents and child care providers need to remember that **if children are under 4'9", they need to be in a booster seat.**

What better way to show you love your children on Valentine's Day than to make sure they are secured

properly. **Make it the law in your car** – it might actually save your children's lives.

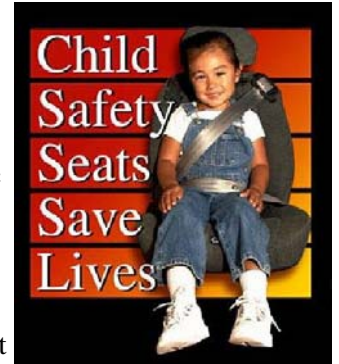
The Pinellas County Health Department has a **Child Passenger Safety Program** that provides technical guidance and education to residents and visitors of Pinellas County regarding the safest practice for transporting children in all types of motor vehicles.

The program includes a 2-1/2-hour training session that covers common misuse and proper installation and is conducted by a Technician/Instructor certified by the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration.

The training is offered throughout the county and is available to anyone seeking information on proper safety seat usage. Low-cost safety seats are available to those meeting financial guidelines.

Personal consultations are also offered to those unable to attend a training session but who would like to have their child safety seat installation checked.

For more information, call 727-824-6980.



### Safety Seat Check-Up!

Saturday, February 10

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

All Children's Hospital Specialty Care Center  
Carillon Office Complex - St. Petersburg

Call 571-1210 for an appointment

The Pinellas County Health Department has teamed up with the Pinellas County Child Passenger Safety Team to offer this great opportunity for you to learn more about properly restraining your child in the car.



**Pinellas County Health Department**

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