

COME OUT FOR HEALTH

9TH ANNUAL NATIONAL LGBT HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

HIV/AIDS and the LGBT Community

Every nine and a half minutes there is a new HIV infection in the United States. The LGBT community, particularly gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men, are disproportionately affected by HIV. Although men who have sex with men are only about 2% of the U.S. population, they account for half of the more than one million people living with HIV in the U.S. and for 53% of all new HIV infections in the U.S. each year. There are also documented cases of HIV infection among lesbians, bisexual women, and other women who have sex with women. The transgender community, particularly transgender people of color, experiences some of the highest rates of HIV: a 2008 analysis of multiple studies showed an HIV prevalence of 28% among transgender women in the U.S.

The main driver of the HIV epidemic in the LGBT community is anti-LGBT discrimination and its associated risk factors, including unprotected sex and substance use by LGBT people. Other factors include a lack of evidence-based HIV/AIDS prevention programs that focus on the LGBT community, a lack of comprehensive safer sex education for LGBT youth, and large numbers of people who have not been tested for HIV and do not know their status. Transgender people may also be at risk for HIV by sharing needles for hormone therapy when they cannot access regular medical care.

People living with HIV/AIDS are affected in many aspects of their lives. Discrimination may cost an LGBT person with HIV their job, their health insurance coverage, or their housing. They may be denied access to coverage by insurance companies that regard HIV as a pre-existing condition, and health care providers may not be knowledgeable about how to help them live with HIV. HIV-positive individuals who seek care through public programs face significant hurdles and may end up on wait lists due to insufficient funds allocated to programs such as the AIDS Drugs Assistance Programs (ADAP) and Housing for People Living with HIV/AIDS.

What can you do?

- Know your status by getting tested! [Locate an HIV and STD testing site near you](#), text your zip code from your mobile phone to KNOWIT (566948), or call 1-800-CDC-INFO
- Encourage comprehensive safer sex education in your local schools that is LGBT-inclusive
- Get to know the [facts about HIV/AIDS](#) and how it affects the LGBT community

Learn more:

Gay Men's Health Crisis (www.gmhc.org)
Greater than AIDS (www.greaterthan.org)

NASTAD (www.nastad.org)
Act Against AIDS (www.nineandahalfminutes.org)



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