



It's Your Life. Protect It.



State of New York
Department of Health

Learn about HIV, So You Can Make Healthy Choices

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. HIV attacks the body's immune system. The immune system protects the body from infections and disease, but it cannot protect the body from HIV.

You are at risk for HIV infection if you:

- Have any kind of unprotected sex — vaginal, oral, or anal — with a man or a woman, especially if you don't use a condom/barrier every time.
- Share needles or works to inject drugs, or to make tattoos or body piercings.
- Have ever had an STD (sexually transmitted disease) or you have an STD now.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is increasingly affecting African American women, who now make up a third of new AIDS cases — up from 1 in 10 at the start of the epidemic. African American women in New York are 9 times more likely to die of AIDS than Caucasian women. AIDS is the Number 1 cause of death among African American women aged 25–34 and African American women are 23 times more likely than white women to become infected with HIV.





The Choice:

Remember — you have choices — your life has value to you, your family, your friends and community. The reality of life and life situations doesn't always let us make the best choices. Although your choices may seem limited, try to make the best choice for YOU under the circumstances. You have the right to ask the important questions:

- Talk with your partner about condoms and testing; don't wait until the heat of the moment — Talk First!
- Be prepared and always carry condoms with you.
- Don't let yourself be threatened or talked out of using a condom...If you are afraid of your sexual partner, get help right away!
- You have the choice to not have sex. Unprotected vaginal, anal and oral sex increases your chances of getting HIV/AIDS.
- Remember that it is okay to consider your needs first when it comes to making healthy choices.

Value Your Life and Protect Yourself.

Why Are We at Risk?

- Our partners may be having sex with other partners who do not use protection.
- Protection may not be used 100% of the time.
- HIV prevention usually takes a back seat when women are struggling to secure jobs, put food on the table, find decent housing and/or child care.

How Can We Prevent HIV Infection?

Try to make the best choice you can for yourself by choosing to:

- Use condoms every time for any kind of sex. They help protect against HIV and other STDs. If the male condom is not an option, learn about the female condom.
- Try to limit your number of sexual partners. The more sex partners you have, the greater your risk of getting HIV.
- Use only new, sterile syringes to prepare and inject drugs. Also, you should not mix sex with alcohol and/or drugs — they will harm your ability to make good choices.
- Get Tested — Know Your Status — Know Your Partner's Status.





Use Your Knowledge to Change Your Behavior

One out of every three black women is not yet aware of their HIV status. When you have the knowledge, you have the power to change your own life and the lives of others.

- Get tested — HIV testing is free, quick, confidential and easy.
- Talk with your partner about “getting tested.” He may be as confused as you are and will want to talk about getting tested. Let him show you he cares and values your life as well as his own — Keep the conversation going!
- You have several HIV testing options. Visit your local health care provider, local clinic, hospital and/or community-based organization.
- If you are HIV negative — you can protect your health by learning how to stay safe from HIV.
- If you are HIV positive, treatments help people live longer, healthier lives. Talk with your doctor about your treatment options. If you do not have a regular doctor, there are doctors that want to help you find the best treatment options.



**Make Healthy Choices and
Move in a Positive Direction.
Protect You and Your Future.
Value Life...**

More Information on HIV

For pictures of how to use a female condom, go to:
www.health.state.ny.us/publications/9571.pdf

New York State HIV/AIDS Hotlines

1-800-541-AIDS (English)

1-800-233-SIDA (Spanish)

TDD: 1-800-369-2437 Voice callers can use the New York Relay System:

Call 711 or 1-800-421-1220 and ask the operator to dial 1-800-541-2437.

Website: www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/aids/publications

New York City HIV/AIDS hotline: 1-800-TALK-HIV (825-5448)

National CDC STD hotlines English/Spanish: 1-800-232-4636

TTY: 1-888-232-6348