



July 2022 Health Tip

Featuring Dr. Veronica J. Ray, MD
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HIV TESTING, TREATMENT & PREVENTION

Happy July! Before you begin reading this month's health tip, please let us know how we are doing in the survey below. Thank you!

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HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system (the body's way of fighting infection). If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

Black/ African Americans account for a higher portion of new HIV diagnoses, those living with HIV, and those ever diagnosed with AIDS, compared to other races and ethnicities. Men who have sex with men (MSM) make up 66% of new diagnoses. African American MSM have a 1 in 2 lifetime risk of contracting HIV.

Many people are still unaware that they are infected. **All** sexually active people between the ages of 13-65 should have a HIV test at least once, and more often depending on their risks for contracting HIV. The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested!



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PREVENTATIVE MEASURES:

- Abstain (Decline) - Abstinence from having sex is the only 100% effective way to prevent HIV, AIDS, STI's and pregnancy.
- Reduce your number of sexual partners - the more partners you have in your lifetime, the bigger the risk of having a partner with HIV.
- Use condoms correctly every time you have sex.
- Communicate with your partners - sharing your status with your partners can help you make good decisions about sex. There is no "right" way to tell someone you have HIV.
- Take Pre-exposure prophylaxis medicine (PrEP) if you are at high risk of becoming infected.
- Know your status and the status of all of your sexual partners.
- People with HIV can also be at increased risk of getting very sick with COVID-19 based on their age and medical conditions.
- **HIV IS NOT** a death sentence. If you are HIV positive, there are many medications that you can take to allow you to live a long, healthy and normal life.
- If you are HIV positive, taking your medication **EVERY DAY** is crucial.
- If you are HIV positive, the most important thing for you to do is receive medical care so that your HIV viral load can become undetectable. When your viral load is undetectable, you cannot transmit the virus to anyone.
- HIV is transmitted through exchange of body fluids such as blood, breast milk, semen, vaginal secretions, and from a pregnant woman to her fetus.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HEALTH AND HIV AWARENESS,
please call or visit:

- On HIV - Durham County Public Health (919)-560-8819
- www.HIV.gov
- www.CommunityHealthCoalition.com or call (919)-470-8680 and/or email contact@communityhealthcoalition.com