

JULY 2021 HEALTH TIP

Featuring Dr. Veronica J. Ray, MD
Internal Medicine Specialist
Duke Health

HIV TESTING, TREATMENT & PREVENTION

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

Blacks/African Americans account for a higher proportion of new HIV diagnoses, those living with HIV, and those ever diagnosed with AIDS, compared to other races/ethnicities. Between 2015 and 2019, NC was among the top five states with the highest number of new HIV diagnoses among Black Americans.

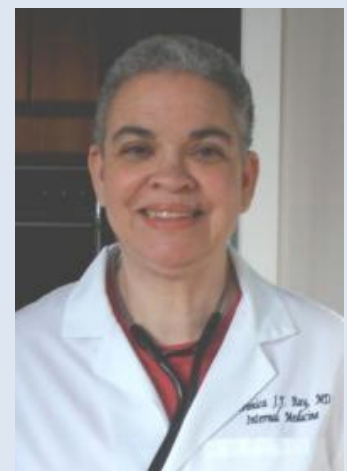
Many people are still unaware that they are infected. All sexually active persons between the ages of 13 and 65 should have a HIV test once, and more often depending on their risks for contracting HIV. The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

- **Abstain** - Abstinence from sexual activity is the only 100% effective way to prevent HIV, other STI's, and pregnancy.
- **Reduce your number of sexual partners** - the more partners you have in your lifetime, the more likely you are to have a partner who is infected with HIV.
- **Use condoms correctly every time you have sex** - condoms are highly effective in preventing the infection.
- **Communicate with your partners** - sharing your status with your partners can help you make good decisions about sex. There's no "right" way to tell someone you have HIV.
- **Take Pre-exposure prophylaxis medicine (PrEP)** if you are at high risk of becoming infected.



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Dr. Veronica J. Ray, MD

HIV TESTING, TREATMENT & PREVENTION continued...

IMPORTANT HEALTH TIPS & INFORMATION

- Know your HIV 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 other medical conditions.
- Men who have sex with men (MSM) comprise 66% of new HIV diagnoses. African American MSM have a 1 in 2 lifetime risk of contracting HIV.
- 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 sexually active with more than one partner and/or your sexual partner has more than one partner, always use condoms.
- 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 to 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, breastmilk, semen, and vaginal secretions, and from a pregnant woman to her fetus.

REMEMBER THE ABC'S.

A-All people age 13 to 65 should be tested at least once for HIV

B-Be PrEPared to use PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis daily to prevent contracting HIV)

C-Condoms as an important strategy for prevention of HIV.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- <http://healthydurham.org/media/durham-knows>
- On HIV - Durham County Public Health (919) 560-8819
- www.HIV.gov
- [www.kff.org/EB55388/-Black Americans and HIV/AIDS:The Basics](http://www.kff.org/EB55388/-Black-Americans-and-HIV/AIDS:The-Basics)

Veronica Ray, MD. Internal Medicine Specialist at Duke Health, says “ Be an advocate for HIV patients in your community. NC was among the top five states with the highest number of new HIV diagnoses among Black Americans in 2019. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has begun to pursue HIV prevention strategies as part of a federal initiative, "Ending the Epidemic: A Plan for American, with increased funding to state and local health departments.”



Health Tip is a message from Community Health Coalition and supported the by Eurofins Foundation.
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