

GET THE FACTS

ON HIV



What you need to know to  
protect and care for yourself

# HIV/AIDS

## HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects African Americans and Latino Americans.<sup>1,2</sup>

- 1.2 million Americans are estimated to be living with HIV in the United States<sup>2</sup>

Nearly **half** are Black Americans<sup>1,2</sup>

**One in five** is Hispanic<sup>1,2</sup>

- Black women are especially affected

The rate of HIV/AIDS diagnoses for Black women is **24 times** the rate for white women<sup>3</sup>

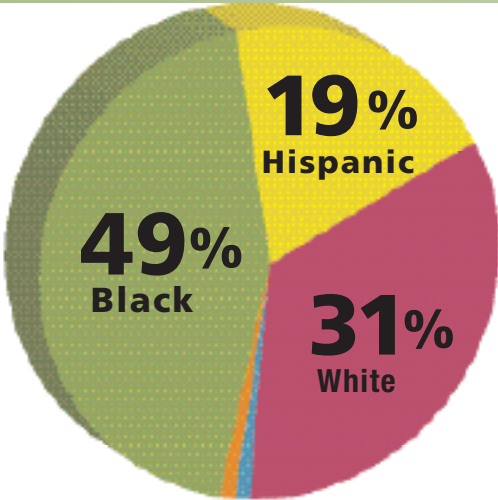
- African American men who have sex with men (MSM), whether they identify themselves as gay,



bisexual or heterosexual, are most severely affected by HIV/AIDS compared with other high-risk groups such as injection drug users, high-risk heterosexuals, and white and Latino MSM<sup>1,2,4</sup>

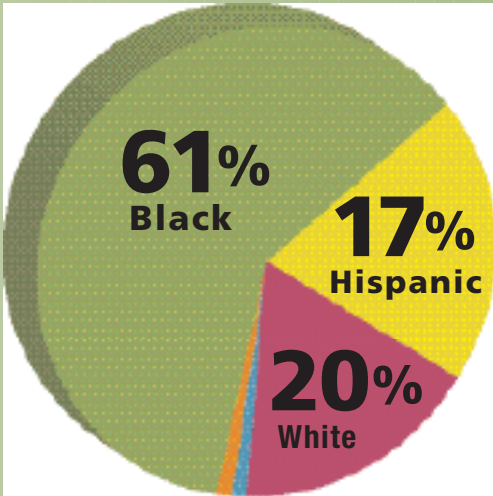
# A COMMUNITY EPIDEMIC

Race/ethnicity of people (including children) diagnosed with HIV during 2005<sup>1,2,4</sup>



<1% Indian/Alaskan Native  
<1% Asian/Pacific Islander

Race/ethnicity of youth (aged 13-24) diagnosed with HIV during 2005<sup>5</sup>



<1% Indian/Alaskan Native  
<1% Asian/Pacific Islander

Note: New HIV diagnoses do not necessarily represent new infections, because some individuals with new HIV diagnoses were infected recently, while others were infected long ago.

# REALITY & MYTH

## Separate myth from reality.

- HIV and AIDS cannot be transmitted by a mosquito bite, by sharing a drinking glass with someone with AIDS, by being around someone with AIDS who was coughing, by hugging or kissing someone with AIDS, and so on. Transmission can only occur if someone is exposed to blood, semen, vaginal fluid or mother's milk from an infected person<sup>6</sup>
- There are no documented cases of HIV being spread by needles left in vending machine coin returns, or from toilet seats<sup>6</sup>
- There is no cure for HIV/AIDS, but there are excellent treatments that help manage the disease and help stop it from getting worse<sup>6</sup>

## Knowing whether you have HIV early is important, because early detection:

- Allows you and your healthcare provider to begin to effectively manage HIV
- Helps prevent transmission of the virus to other people
- Offers opportunities for improving and maintaining your overall health

Without treatment, HIV infection will get worse until opportunistic infections and AIDS develop. Since the beginning of the HIV epidemic through 2005, more than 200,000 Blacks have died of AIDS.<sup>1,2</sup>

Getting treatment  
is important.

# A COMMUNITY EPIDEMIC

## Why is HIV/AIDS an epidemic in communities of color?

■ African Americans and Latinos face challenges that may increase their risk for HIV infection.

These may include:<sup>1,2,4</sup>

- less access to medical care in general and preventative medicine in particular
- later diagnosis and delayed treatment
- commonly held misconceptions about transmission and infection
- mistrust of the medical system
- injection drug use
- substance abuse
- sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- living in poverty
- denial, homophobia and fear



You can get reliable information about what's true and what's not true at these web sites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/aa/index.htm>

<http://www.blackaidsday.org/>

<http://www.blackaids.org/>

# KNOW YOUR RISK

## Test your knowledge. Take the quiz.\*

1. Do you know your HIV status?
2. Do you know your partner's HIV status?
3. Do you know the HIV status of the sex partners you've had in the past?
4. Do you know your partner's sexual history?
5. If you're sexually active, do you always insist on a condom?
6. Do you still think of AIDS as a gay white male disease?
7. Do you know that the most common method of HIV infection in Black women is heterosexual sex?<sup>1</sup>
8. Do you take it for granted that you're in a monogamous relationship?
9. Do you believe you can tell an HIV positive person just by looking at him or her?
10. Are you aware that HIV/AIDS is the leading killer of Black women, ages 25-44?<sup>1,3</sup>
11. Do you know where to go for to be tested, or for care if you are positive?
12. Are you adhering to your treatment if you are positive?

### Answer Key

The correct answer for numbers 6, 8, and 9 is no. All other answers should be yes. Realize that even one wrong answer can put you and others at risk for HIV/AIDS. The more wrong answers you have, the more at risk you are. By learning more about HIV/AIDS and how it's transmitted, and making a few changes in your lifestyle, you can avoid becoming another HIV/AIDS statistic. If you answered no to questions 11 or 12, speak with a healthcare provider — or see the *Where Can I Go?* insert inside this brochure.

# KNOW THE FACTS

## If you've tested positive for HIV

- Take action now. See a healthcare provider immediately even if you don't feel sick
- Be responsible – don't spread the virus. If you've tested positive, you can infect other people by having unprotected sex, by sharing needles, and even by nursing your baby



## **HIV/AIDS is a treatable disease.**

Prompt and early diagnosis of HIV is a critical step in dealing with the crisis within our communities.

Once diagnosed, people with HIV can learn to manage the disease and get life saving treatments. They can also take steps to protect their partners and protect their community.

## **Where to go for help**

There are people and places in your community who offer HIV testing and counselling, and will help anyone testing positive to get the medical care and treatment they need to live with the disease. Check your local listings.

# Get tested now

## References:

1. CDC HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet. *HIV/AIDS among African Americans*, January 2007. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC: 2006:1-7.
2. Kaiser Family Foundation. HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet. *Black Americans and HIV/AIDS*. December 2006.
3. Kaiser Family Foundation. HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet. *Women and HIV/AIDS in the United States*. December 2006.
4. CDC. *HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet. Latinos and HIV/AIDS*. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC: 2006:1-2.
5. Kaiser Family Foundation. *Sexual Health Statistics for Teenagers and Young Adults in the United States*. December 2006.
6. AIDS InfoNet. *Fact sheet #158: Aids Myths and Misunderstandings*, 2006. Available at <http://www.aidsinfonet.org>.



CLOSING THE GAP  
BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE