

NEW JERSEY AIDS/HIV/STD HOTLINE

PRESS RELEASE

June 2019

Testing is the Key to Living Healthy with HIV

National HIV Testing Day, June 27th

(Newark, NJ) – June 27th marks the annual observance of National HIV Testing Day, a day to encourage all to know their HIV status by getting tested; if newly diagnosed with HIV, get linked to medical care and treatment right away. Over the last decade, great strides have been made in all aspects of HIV infection, from prevention to treatment. Today, HIV is a manageable chronic illness, rather than a “death sentence.” Thanks to early diagnosis and effective treatment plans, people living with HIV are healthier and living longer than ever before. Individuals on effective antiretroviral treatment (ART) can significantly decrease the amount of HIV virus in their body to undetectable levels, halting the progression of HIV while also preventing transmission to partners.

Of the more than 1 million people living with HIV in this country, 1 out of every 7 do not know they have HIV.¹ Not knowing one’s status puts a person’s health and the health of their sexual partners at risk. A person who is unaware of his/her HIV infection will continue to spread the virus to others. We can reduce new infections by encouraging early detection (testing), linking newly diagnosed individuals to care in a timely manner and keeping people living with HIV in treatment so they can remain virally suppressed. Testing can also serve as a gateway to prevention services for those who are HIV negative — PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis).

You cannot rely on symptoms to identify HIV infection. The only way to detect the virus is through a blood test. Testing has never been easier or faster; in honor of National HIV Testing Day, many local health departments, federally qualified health centers, and community-based organizations will be offering free testing during celebratory events. Although some groups are more likely to be exposed to HIV, we encourage everyone who is sexually active, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, to visit a local testing day event — get informed, get tested and if positive, get treatment immediately after diagnosis. The sooner a person begins treatment, the greater the likelihood the virus will be managed, and that person can lead a long, healthy life.

New Jersey offers free HIV and other STI services to all state residents via the hotline. Knowing who to call for resources and information is the first step in ending the HIV epidemic in New Jersey. The hotline is staffed by health professionals (doctors, nurses, and pharmacists) available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide free, confidential help via phone at 1-800-624-2377, text/email at 8006242377@njpies.org, or [chat here](#)

- Referrals for testing sites and other related services
- HIV, STI and hepatitis prevention and treatment information
- Side effects from medicines used to treat HIV and other sexually transmitted infections

¹ CDC. [HIV/AIDS Key Facts](#)

- Referrals to PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) services
- Counseling and treatment locations
- Partner notification
- ADDP

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New Jersey AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline

Healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and pharmacists) provide telephone consultation for people seeking information about HIV/AIDS, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and other sexually transmitted diseases including hepatitis. Callers receive information tailored to their needs; discussion about prevention, referrals for testing sites and other related services, counseling and testing locations, and information on treatment and adverse reactions to medications. The hotline is administered by the New Jersey Poison Control Center and funded by the New Jersey Department of Health, Division of HIV, STD, and TB services.

Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

Founded in 1954, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School is the oldest school of medicine in the state. Today it is part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and graduates approximately 170 physicians a year. In addition to providing the MD degree, the school offers MD/PhD, MD/MPH and MD/MBA degrees through collaborations with other institutions of higher education. Dedicated to excellence in education, research, clinical care and community outreach, the medical school comprises 20 academic departments and works with several healthcare partners, including its principal teaching hospital, University Hospital. Its faculty consists of numerous world-renowned scientists and many of the region's "top doctors." Home to the nation's oldest student-run clinic, New Jersey Medical School hosts more than 50 centers and institutes, including the Public Health Research Institute Center, the Global Tuberculosis Institute and the Neurological Institute of New Jersey. For more information please visit: njms.rutgers.edu.

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