TuSalud

National HIV Testing Day 2023

The theme of this year's #HIVTestingDay, marked Tuesday, June 27, is "Take the Test & Take the Next Steps."

June 27, 2023 By Trent Straube

Tuesday, June 27, marks National HIV Testing Day (#HIVTestingDay and #NHTD) 2023. This year's theme is "Take the Test & Take the Next Steps," which highlights the fact that learning your HIV status is just one step on one's self-care journey, optimal health outcomes and HIV prevention.

> National #HIVTestingDay is June 27. No matter how you test, no matter your test results, you can take the next step for your health. A federally qualified community health center near you can help. Learn more about HIV testing options: https://t.co/hrxGchw5xA. #StopHIVTogether pic.twitter.com/kELIQbJpJR
>
> — CHCAMS (@CHCsofMS) June 26, 2023

People who test positive for HIV can take daily antiretroviral pills or long-acting injectables to keep the virus from replicating. People with HIV who achieve and maintain viral suppression experience slower disease progression, enjoy better overall health and are less likely to develop opportunistic illnesses. What's more, people with an undetectable viral load don't transmit HIV to others through sex, a fact referred to as Undetectable Equals Untransmittable or U=U.

As the POZ Basics on HIV Testing explains:

> "If you think you might have been exposed to HIV, it's important to get tested promptly. If you test positive, starting antiretroviral treatment quickly will minimize damage to your immune system and reduce the risk of transmitting the virus to others.

> “According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) there are about 1.2 million people living with HIV in the United States. The CDC estimates that around 14% of people with HIV do not know they carry the virus, and nearly 40% of new HIV infections are transmitted by people who don’t know their status.”

Put another way, about 1 in 8 people with HIV don’t know their status.

Meet today’s Let’s #StopHIVTogether Ambassador: Curtis Jackson! ????

In honor of #HIVTestingDay, Curtis encourages everyone to take the test and take the next step for your health. #TogetherAmbassadorSpotlight pic.twitter.com/tVqB2GLYSp

— Open Arms Healthcare Center (@openarms_ms) June 26, 2023

People who test negative for HIV can take additional steps to remain negative. For example, they can start PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, a highly effective regimen of daily pills or injectables. Using condoms is another option.

In a recent Dear Colleague letter, federal HIV prevention leaders Robyn Neblett Fanfair, MD, MPH, and Jonathan H. Mermin, MD, MPH, wrote:

> “One of the overall goals of Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. (EHE) is to increase knowledge of HIV status to 95% by 2025 and to maintain that level until 2030. In 2021, 87% of people with HIV knew their status. A recent article in Oxford Academic suggests that expanding HIV testing, particularly among disproportionately affected populations, may have the greatest impact on reducing new HIV infections. Making HIV testing simple and accessible is critical to achieving this goal.”

On social media, click #HIVTestingDay and #NHTD to find sharable posts (like the ones embedded

in this article) and information about local events, including places offering free HIV testing.

You can also test yourself for free in the privacy of your own home. With the help of the gay dating app Grindr, the CDC's Together TakeMeHome program aims to deliver 1 million free HIV self-tests through the website. For details, see "A Sure Thing for Grindr Users: Free Home HIV Tests!"

In related news, LGBTQ senior advocates with SAGE (Advocacy & Services for LGBTQ+ Elders) are urging the CDC to update its current HIV testing guidelines, which recommend that everyone ages 13 to 64 be tested at least once as part of routine care. SAGE wants the upper limit removed so that more older people will get tested.

Below is a video posted by HIV.gov about National HIV Testing Day. It features Kayla Quimbley, an Advocates for Youth activist, National Youth HIV/AIDS Ambassador and member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

In the video, she moderates a conversation with Harold Phillips, director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, and Jonathan Mermin, director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, about the importance of the annual observation.

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http://beta.docker.tusaludmag.com/article/national-hiv-testing-day-2023