## What it is

HIV stands for the human immunodeficiency virus. HIV is an infection that, with daily HIV treatment, is a long-term chronic condition.

When a person is infected with HIV, the virus makes copies of itself by using the cells in the body that are part of the immune system.

This destroys these immune cells in the process. If left untreated, HIV will continue to destroy immune cells until the damage to the immune system becomes more severe and eventually people develop AIDS. This is a process that can take up to 10 to 15 years.

AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, which means that an infection with HIV has developed to a late stage. The immune system has been weakened to the point where the person with HIV is more likely to get infections or other illnesses that can be life-threatening. If an HIV infection is left untreated, it is likely that it will eventually lead to the person who has the infection dying from AIDS.

Half of all new STDs reported each year are among young people 15 to 24.3

More than 46% of sexually active high school students did not use a condom the last time they had sex.

CDC data show that lesbian, gay, and bisexual high school students are at substantial risk for serious health outcomes as compared to their peers.

**HIV, STDs, and Teen Pregnancy are Health Consequences**

Sexual risk behaviors place youth at risk for HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unintended pregnancy:

HIV

**21% of all new HIV diagnoses** were among young people (aged 13-24) in 2017; 87% were young men and 13% were young women.

### STDs

**Half of the 20 million new STDs** reported each year were among young people (aged 15 to 24)

Teen Pregnancy

**Nearly 210,000 babies** were born to teen girls (aged 15–19 years) in 2016.

Abstinence from vaginal, anal, and oral intercourse is the only 100% effective way to prevent HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy. The correct and consistent use of male latex condoms can reduce the risk of STD transmission, including HIV infection. However, no protective method is 100% effective, and condom use cannot guarantee absolute protection against any STD or pregnancy.

What is high-risk substance use?

For the purposes of addressing HIV and STD prevention, high-risk substance use is any use by adolescents of substances with a high risk of adverse outcomes (i.e., injury, criminal justice involvement, school dropout, loss of life). This includes misuse of prescription drugs, use of illicit drugs (i.e., cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, inhalants, hallucinogens, or ecstasy), and use of injection drugs which have a high risk of infection of blood-borne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis.

**The Facts**

14% of high school students reported having ever used select illicit or injection drugs (i.e. cocaine, inhalants, heroin, methamphetamines, hallucinogens, or ecstasy).

14% of students reported the non-prescription use of opioids.

Injection drug use places youth at direct risk for HIV, and drug use broadly places youth at risk of overdose.

Youth opioid use is directly linked to sexual risk behaviors.

Students who report ever using prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription are more likely than other students to have been the victim of physical or sexual dating violence.

Drug use is associated with sexual risk behavior, experience of violence, and mental health and suicide risks.

**LGBT**

A complex combination of factors can impact youth health outcomes. LGB youth are at greater risk for depression, suicide, substance use, and sexual behaviors that can place them at increased risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).3 Nearly one-third (29%) of LGB youth had attempted suicide at least once in the

prior year compared to 6% of heterosexual youth.3 In 2014, young gay and bisexual men accounted for 8 out of 10 HIV diagnoses among youth.

* Having sex with someone who has HIV. In general:
  + Anal sex is the highest-risk sexual behavior. Receptive anal sex (bottoming) is riskier than insertive anal sex (topping).
  + Vaginal sex is the second highest-risk sexual behavior.
  + Having many sex partners or having other STDs can increase the chances of getting HIV through sex.
* Sharing needles, syringes, rinse water, or other equipment (works) used to make injectable drugs with someone who has HIV.
  + Less commonly, HIV may be spread by:
  + Oral sex. The chances of getting HIV through oral sex are much less than from anal or vaginal sex.

## How can I prevent HIV?

Understand what are riskier and safer sexual behaviors.

Use condoms each time you have sex and make sure to use them correctly each time.

Reduce the number of people you have sex with.

If you have HIV, take HIV antiretroviral treatment (ART) regularly to greatly lower the chances of giving HIV to others and improve your own health.

If your partner is HIV-positive, encourage your partner to get and stay on treatment.

Talk to your doctor about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), taking HIV medicine daily to prevent getting HIV.

Talk to your doctor right away (within 3 days) about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) if you have a possible exposure to HIV.

Get tested and treated for other STDs and encourage your partners to do the same.