

Youth Health at Risk



While most Americans believe that HIV/AIDS is no longer an issue in the United States, the data tell a different story.

Young adults face the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the United States. And HIV is an STD.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control:

– Young adults aged 15 to 24 account for [half of the 20 million new STDs that occur in the U.S. each year.](#)

– Compared to other groups, women aged 15 to 24 experience a disproportionate number of chlamydia and gonorrhea infections – many of which go undiagnosed. Left untreated, these infections can lead to serious consequences, including infertility. Every year more than 24,000 women in the US become infertile because of an STD many did not know they had.

– [One in four](#) new HIV infections are in people aged 13 to 24. Yet, [only 22 percent](#) of sexually experienced high school students have ever been tested for HIV.

These data alone should be a wake-up call for all of us who care about our nation's youth.

There is a grave misconception that HIV has been eradicated from the US and most of the world

Yes, there have been amazing scientific strides in effective HIV treatment so people are living longer and those on treatment consistently are much less infectious. But that has not stopped HIV transmission, especially when such a high

percentage of people who have HIV disease do not know it. Take time to learn more about the risks America's youth face regarding STDs, including HIV. Take time to talk with your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews—all the youth that are important in your life. One of the best gifts you can give them is a healthy future.

Source: AIDS.gov; November 5, 2015 blog Data Provide Insight to Improve Adolescents' Health.