



HARC's Guide on WORLD AIDSDAY DECEMBER 1

What is HIV/AIDS?¹

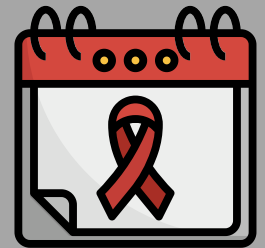


HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. The virus destroys certain cells (CD4 or T Cells) that are responsible for fighting infections, and thus, the virus makes the body vulnerable to other infections and diseases.

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is the final stage of HIV infection in which the immune system is compromised to the point that patients experience an increasing number of severe illnesses.

What is World AIDS Day?²

World AIDS Day was founded in 1988 and was the first ever global health day, which takes place on December 1st of each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness.



Why is World AIDS Day Important?²

Globally, there are an estimated **38 million people living with HIV**. Despite the virus only being identified in 1984, more than **35 million people have died** of HIV or AIDS related illnesses. This makes it one of the most destructive pandemics in history. Even though today there is HIV treatment, laws to protect people living with HIV, and we understand more about the condition, people may still not know how to protect themselves and others. In addition, stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with HIV or AIDS.

World AIDS Day is important because it reminds the public and government that HIV has not gone away and there is still a need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education on the topic.

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How do I know if I have HIV?³

The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested. According to the CDC, in the United States, **36,801 people received an HIV diagnosis in 2019**. In total, an estimated of **1,189,700 people in the United States had HIV** at the end of 2019. Of those people, about **13% did not know they had HIV**. Thus, it is important and recommended that people between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of their routine care.

In the Coachella Valley⁴

49%

have *never* tested

In the Coachella Valley, 51% of local adults (over 169,300 people) have been tested for HIV at least once. The other 49% (more than 162,900 people) have never been tested and thus do not know their status.

To assess the relative risk for contracting HIV, Coachella Valley adults were asked a series of question, including if they have had unprotected sex.



Results show that **9% of local adults are at risk for contracting HIV**. Of these individuals, **22% have never been tested for HIV**, which indicates that more than 6,500 individuals are at high risk for contracting HIV but have no idea of their HIV status.

Reasons and Barriers to HIV Testing⁵

A 2017 survey conducted by HARC for Get Tested Coachella Valley (GTCV), a region-wide public health campaign dedicated to reduce HIV, driven by DAP Health, revealed the top reasons people do and do not get tested.

The top three motivators for HIV testing include:

1. It was offered for free at an event or community location (30%)
2. Experts recommend that everyone get tested, so I did (26%)
3. My healthcare provider offered to do the test (25%)

The top three barriers to HIV testing include:

1. I don't think I'm at risk for getting HIV (44%)
2. My doctor/healthcare provider has never offered to test me (27%)
3. I'm not sexually active (24%)

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Are there any HIV symptoms?¹

Some people have flu-like symptoms within 2 to 4 weeks after infection (called acute HIV infection). These symptoms may last for a few days or several weeks. Possible symptoms include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Rash
- Night sweats
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Mouth ulcers

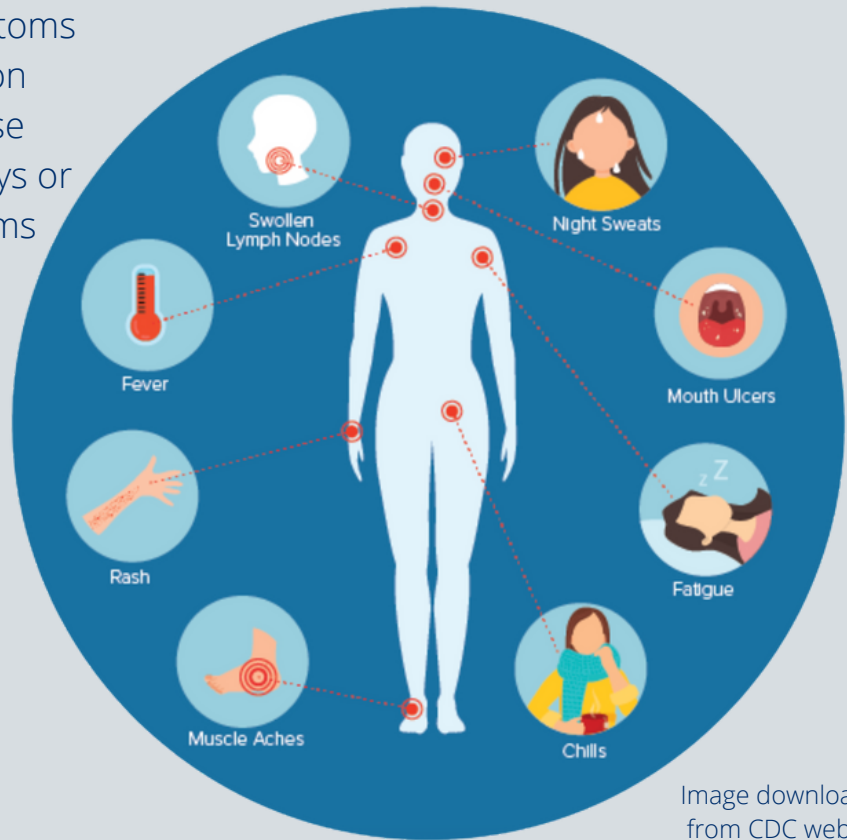


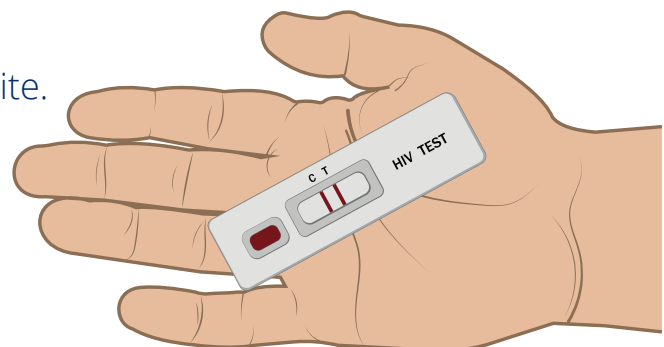
Image downloaded from [CDC website](#)

However, it is important to note that some people may not feel sick during acute HIV infection and these symptoms don't mean you have HIV. Other illnesses can cause the same symptoms. The only way to know for sure is by getting tested.

Where can I get tested? Local Resource: DAP Health

DAP Health (DAP) is a federally qualified health center in Palm Springs. HIV prevention, testing and treatment are its foundation. DAP Health also specializes in guiding clients to live full lives despite their HIV diagnosis as they offer primary, behavioral, and dental healthcare to people in the community, regardless of HIV status.

DAP Health offers free and confidential HIV testing onsite. To get tested, please visit: <https://www.daphealth.org/free-hiv-testing/>.



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More Resources with DAP Health

PrEP



DAP Health also offers pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), which is a daily pill that can help prevent HIV infection. Along with other prevention methods like condoms, PrEP can offer good protection against HIV. DAP Health also offers post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), which, if taken within a few days of exposure, can prevent HIV infection.

Please visit <https://www.daphealth.org/pre-exposure-prophylaxis/> for a consultation or to learn more about PrEP treatments.

Lastly, DAP Health has found that housing, food, transportation, and a social connection are just as important as medicine for treating HIV. For this reason DAP Health link clients to these and other social services and resources every day

To learn more about what else DAP Health offers, visit <https://www.daphealth.org/>.



Three Ways to Be A Part of World AIDS Day

1. **Get tested.** Knowing your status can keep yourself and your sexual partners healthy.
2. **Share this infographic and other informational resources** with others. These may start important conversations.
3. **Consider donating to World AIDS Day campaigns** or other organizations that address HIV and AIDS. Local examples include:
 - o AIDS Assistance Program: <https://aidsassistance.org/>
 - o DAP Health: <https://www.daphealth.org/>
 - o HIV+ Aging Research Project – Palm Springs (HARP PS): <https://www.harp-ps.org/>
 - o TruEvolution: <https://www.truevolution.org/>

Sources:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/whatishiv.html>
2. <https://www.worldaidsday.org/about/>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html>
4. Coachella Valley Community Health Survey. (2019). HARC. Available online at: <https://harcddata.org/coachella-valley-community-health-survey/executive-report/>
5. Get Tested Coachella Valley Community Survey. (2017). HARC. Available upon request.

For more data and resources,
please visit:
[HARCdata.org](https://harcddata.org)

