

# EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIV/AIDS

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). It destroys cells that fight infections in the body, making it difficult to fight off germs that the body would normally resist. HIV can be treated but not cured.

## GET TESTED. HIV TESTING RESULTS ARE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

Get tested to protect your health and the health of your family. Teenagers (aged 13 to 18) do not need parental consent to be tested for HIV.

*NYS Public Health Law mandates the offer of HIV testing to everyone age 13 or older. As part of the HIV testing process, you must be provided information about HIV as defined by Public Health Law.*



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## LEARN ABOUT HIV/AIDS

1. HIV can be **spread through unprotected sex** (vaginal, anal, or oral sex) with someone who has HIV. HIV can also **spread through contact with infected blood or sharing needles** (piercing, tattooing, drug equipment including needles).
2. Pregnant women with HIV can spread the virus to their infants **during pregnancy or delivery**, or while breast feeding.
3. There are **treatments** for HIV/AIDS that can help people stay healthy and live longer.
4. People with HIV/AIDS can take **measures to protect uninfected people** from getting HIV and infected people from getting additional strains of HIV.
5. HIV **Testing is voluntary** and can be done **anonymously** (you don't have to give your name) in public testing centers. Testing is also available in hospitals, doctor's offices or community clinics. CBWCHC **offers confidential testing**, meaning your test results and related information are kept private.
6. Information about people who are infected with HIV is **ONLY used by doctors and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)** to understand new cases of HIV infection and to tell people who are at risk of infection where to go for counseling, testing, and treatment if they are infected.
7. The law **protects people from discrimination** based on HIV status, and services are available to help individuals who experienced this discrimination.

## PROTECT YOURSELF

- Always use synthetic condoms correctly to help prevent other STIs.
- Know your partner's HIV status. Take pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) if you are at risk of HIV exposure or post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) if you think you have been exposed to HIV.