



Improving the health of Durham
& NC communities since 1989

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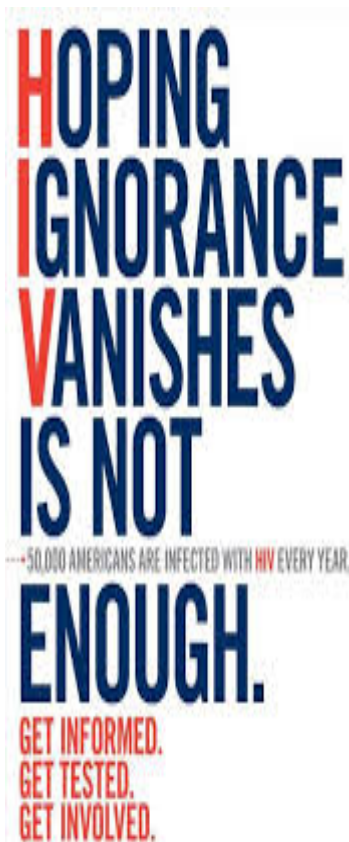
Date: July 28, 2013

Healthy Sunday Topic: HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS remains one of the leading causes of deaths in the country and in the world. Durham County has the 4th highest rate of HIV in North Carolina and African American women in the Raleigh - Durham area are five times more likely to get the disease than in most other areas of the country. As a community, we need to work together to reduce the rate of infection. Following the footsteps of the President, we can help by getting involved and staying informed.



Risk Factors that contribute to the high rates of HIV infection:



Sexual - Contact such as unprotected sex with multiple partners or unprotected sex with persons known to have or be at a high risk for HIV infection.

Injection drug use - In addition to being at risk from sharing unclean needles, casual and chronic illegal substance users may be more likely to engage in unprotected sex under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol.

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) - The presence of certain STDs can significantly increase one's chances of contracting HIV infection. A person who has both HIV infection and certain STDs has a greater chance of spreading HIV infection to others.

Lack of awareness of HIV - In a recent study of men who have sex with men (MSM) in five cities, 46% of the black MSM were HIV-positive and 67% of those men were unaware of their infection.

Stigma - a "negative social label that identifies people as deviant" also puts too many African American communities at a high risk of infection. Many at risk for HIV infection fear stigma more than knowing their status, choosing instead to hide their high-risk behavior rather than seek counseling and testing. Therefore they continue to be at risk and may infect others.

Tamera Coyne-Beasley, MD, MPH of UNC Pediatrics, Internal Medicine and the School of Public Health, states that "HIV/AIDS is a leading cause of death for African Americans, and we should do all we can to prevent acquiring the disease. Knowing your status and the status of your partners is important for anyone contemplating activities that place them at risk for infection."

Minorities and HIV/AIDS

The CDC's new estimates show that African Americans, more than any other racial/ethnic group, continue to bear the greatest burden of HIV in the United States. While blacks represent approximately 14 percent of the total U.S. population, they accounted for almost half (44 percent) of all new HIV infections in 2010 (20,900). HIV incidence among blacks was almost eight times higher than that of whites. As a community, African-Americans have a lot of work to do in order to ensure that these numbers decrease. Learning how to prevent infection of the virus and teaching children and others in the community is very important.

Treatment:

There is no cure for HIV/AIDS; however, there are medical treatments that can help people live longer and healthier lives. It is important that everyone knows their HIV status and it is imperative that you get tested. Getting tested and learning how to manage your health is the sure way to live longer and stay healthier. There are many facilities including the Durham public health office that offer free HIV testing and counseling. If you have HIV/AIDS please see a physician for expert advice and management.

Prevention of HIV/AIDS: Remember the ABCDs

A=Abstinence from sexual activity until marriage

B=Be faithful in a marital and monogamous relationship

C=Condoms

D=Drugs, don't use them, especially IV drugs or drugs with needles

For more information:

www.aids.gov

<http://www.cdc.gov/ActAgainstAIDS/>

www.aidshealth.org

www.caare-inc.org



Health Tip is a message from your Community Health Coalition, Inc. and is written in partnership with Durham Academy of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy, Old North State Medical Society, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, and Durham Regional Hospital.

REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!