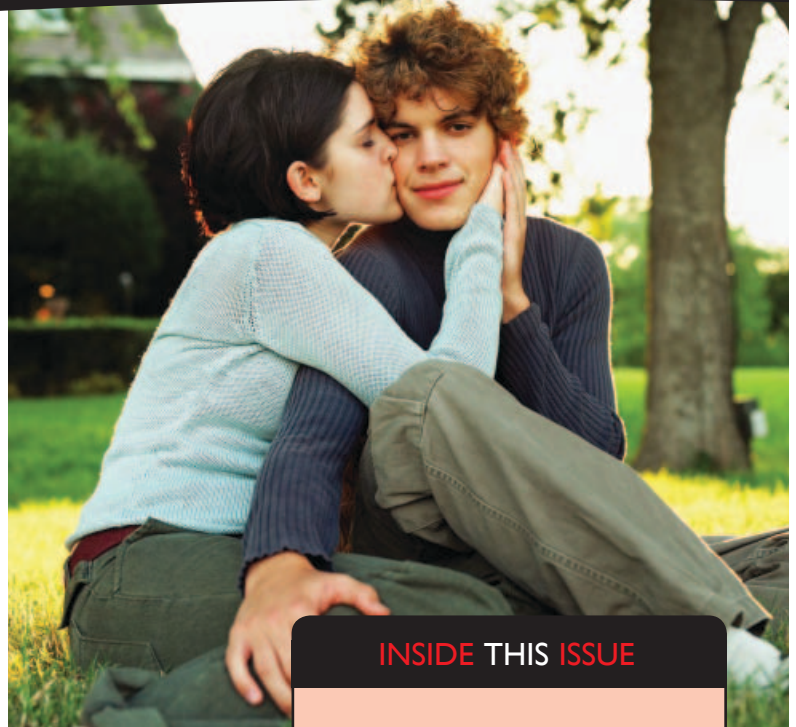




HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

Sexual CONNECTION

HIV and Teens



Most teenagers think they're invincible and have "it won't happen to me" mentality. Most of them think HIV "happens to other people". All teens need to take HIV seriously, along with other sexually transmitted infections (STI's). They need to become educated about HIV and get tested, especially if they are engaging in risky behaviour.

Teens and Sex

Teens are having sex, that's a fact. Nearly half, 47% of high school students, state they are having sex. That number is even greater among college and university students aged 18-24 (80%).

The most common way HIV is transmitted is through unprotected sex. This means not using a condom for vaginal or anal intercourse.

Men having sex with men (MSM) are in large part contracting HIV among this age group. MSM may also transmit the virus to women for a number of reasons. Those reasons being:

- less likely to tell others they are attracted to men.
- less likely to be tested.
- less likely to know their HIV status.

- more likely to have one or more female partners.
- trying to admit to themselves and others, they are heterosexual.

Teens also at risk for HIV would be:

- runaway and homeless youth.
- young people injecting drugs.

HIV does not discriminate; it affects the rich and the poor.

Not using condoms also puts teens at risk for other STI's. One-quarter of STI's each year are found to be among teens aged 15-19. Acquiring an STI will greatly increase the chances of getting or transmitting HIV. Consistently using condoms will significantly reduce the chance of getting HIV or other STI's.

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Alcohol and Drugs

The use of alcohol and/or drugs also increases the risk of acquiring HIV. Teens will engage in riskier behaviour such as unprotected sex, while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or both.

Runaways and other homeless youth are at an increased risk of HIV if they are trading sex for drugs, money, or housing.

Injecting drugs also increases the risk for HIV, especially shared needles. If needles are shared for tattooing or piercing, there is a risk of acquiring HIV.

Young Women and HIV

Young women are at increased risk of acquiring HIV through heterosexual sex. In the age group 16-21, it was found that the HIV rate was 50% higher than men in that same age range. There are several reasons for this. Those reasons being:

- not aware of their partner's risk factors.
- lack of power in the relationship.
- having sex with older men who may have HIV.

HIV is transmitted easier from man to woman than from woman to man.

Teens and young adults need accurate information that should include the following to decrease their risk of HIV:

- how to protect themselves.
- where to get tested for HIV.
- how to talk with their parents and partners about HIV/AIDS.
- how to use a condom correctly and consistently.
- abstinence.

Clear family discussions regarding values and expectations about sex are important. Ongoing conversations about sex, HIV, STI's and pregnancy may help teens and young people wait until they are capable of making the right decision about sexual activity.



Facts About HIV/AIDS

What's the big deal about HIV and AIDS?

Some think that HIV and AIDS are for "those people" to worry about. That thinking is wrong. HIV doesn't discriminate, it affects everyone.

What's the difference between HIV and AIDS?

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. AIDS is a serious health condition that weakens the body's immune system.

How do you get infected with HIV?

HIV is passed on through bodily fluids such as semen, vaginal secretions, anal/rectal secretions, and blood. These fluids can be passed from one person to another through unprotected sex and sharing needles.

What is safer sex?

Safer sex means using a condom when having intercourse. Condoms should also be used when having oral sex as well. It also means using a dental dam for oral and vaginal/anal contact.

Can you get infected the first time?

If your partner is infected with HIV, you can become infected even the first time.

Is there a cure?

There is no cure for HIV. Doctors are able to treat the virus, but there is no way to rid the body of HIV.

How can I tell if someone is infected with HIV?

You can't, so you need to communicate with your partner. You can't tell by looking at your partner if he/she is HIV positive. You both should get tested.

How can I get tested?

You should attend your local sexual health clinic or family doctor to be tested. All testing is confidential. Testing is done through a simple blood test.

I have HIV, what should I do?

If you have found out you have HIV, you will need to tell the people you have had sex with or have shared needles with you are HIV positive. Also, these people will have to be tested.

Where in Haldimand-Norfolk can I get tested?

You can get tested at the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit offices in both Simcoe and Caledonia. Testing is free and confidential. HIV testing is 99% accurate and consists of pre-test and post test

counselling. HIV testing is done by a blood test. STI testing through a urine test is also available to test for chlamydia and gonorrhoea. Call either office, Simcoe 519-426-6170 Ext. 3225 or Caledonia 905-318-5367 Ext. 346 for an appointment for testing.

Testing is also available at your doctor's office.

Fast FACTS



- People 25 and under, account for almost half of all new HIV infections worldwide.
- HIV positive body fluid + direct access to the bloodstream + risky activity = possible infection with HIV.
- In 2007, it was estimated that 2 million people worldwide under the age of 15 were living with HIV.
- In Canada, 25% of high school students believe there is a cure for HIV/AIDS. There is no cure, but treatment is available.

Public Health Nurses in your School

The following Public Health Nurses are in your school once a week:

Marilyn Antkiw	Valley Heights Secondary School
Sabine Murphy	Delhi Secondary School Waterford District Secondary School
Angie Swick	Simcoe Composite School Holy Trinity Secondary School

Lynda Burville	Port Dover Composite School Cayuga Secondary School
Frances DeBoer	Dunnville Secondary School
Angie Campbell	Hagersville Secondary School McKinnon Park Secondary School

Please visit our website for more information at www.hnhu.org.
The AIDS Network • 905.528.0854 • 1.866.563.0563

References:

What Parents and Providers need to Know About HIV Risk and Teens, www.thewellproject.org,
AIDS, Sex, and Teens, www.avert.org
HIV and Teens, www.livestrong.com

Simcoe:
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