



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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June 27 is National HIV Testing Day

Local health officials are reminding people it's always important to get tested and know your HIV status in recognition of National HIV Testing Day on Wednesday, June 27. Humboldt County recently saw a spike in newly diagnosed cases, and the only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested.

HIV or Human Immunodeficiency Virus is an autoimmune disorder that destroys cells that fight disease and infection. While HIV is treatable, it is most contagious in its early stages when someone may not know they have the virus.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says an estimated 1.1 million people in the United States live with HIV and 1 in 7 of them are unaware they have it. CDC recommends everyone get tested for HIV at least once in their lifetime and those in high-risk groups get tested once a year or more.

Particularly high-risk groups include gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, along with people who have recently had a sexually transmitted infection, and those with multiple sex partners met through hook up apps or websites. People who inject drugs or have sex under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are also at increased risk.

Health officials advise getting tested and avoiding the following risk factors:

- Multiple or anonymous sex partners, especially those met through hookup apps or sites
- Unprotected sex
- Sex or needle-sharing with at-risk partners.

In addition, Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) can decrease the chances of becoming infected by preventing HIV from taking hold and spreading throughout the body upon exposure. The CDC recommends people in high-risk groups talk to a medical provider to determine if they should use PrEP to lower the risk of transmission.

For more information or for free, confidential consultation and testing,
contact the Public Health Clinic at 707-268-2108 or email
freehivtest@co.humboldt.ca.us.

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