HIV among Women

United States

From 2010 through 2014, the number of new diagnoses of HIV infection among adult women (age 13+) in the U.S. decreased. In 2014, 19% (N=8,328) of all new HIV infections diagnosed in the U.S. were women down from the 9,831 new diagnoses in 2010.

The proportion of HIV infection and AIDS cases among adult females diagnosed in the U.S. by race/ethnicity, 2014

Race/Ethnicity	HIV infection		AIDS	
White	1,483	18%	808	16%
Black	5,128	62%	3,334	65%
Hispanic	1,350	16%	737	14%
American Indian	49	1%	24	<1%
Asian	137	2%	62	1%

Why Focus on Women?

Like other affected populations, women face a number of risk factors that may contribute to their risk for HIV infection.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates one in four people living with HIV in the U.S. are women.
- Most women (greater than 80%) are infected with HIV through heterosexual sex. Some women become infected because they may be unaware of a male partner's risk factors for HIV infection or have a lack of HIV knowledge and lower perception of risk. Relationship dynamics also play a role. For example, some women may not insist on condom use because they fear that their partner will physically abuse or leave them.
- Both unprotected vaginal and anal sex pose a risk for HIV transmission. Unprotected anal sex presents an even greater risk for HIV transmission for women than unprotected vaginal sex.
- Women who have experienced sexual abuse may be more likely than women with no abuse history to use drugs as a coping mechanism, have difficulty refusing unwanted sex, exchange sex for drugs, or engage in high-risk sexual activities.
- Injection drug and other substance use increase HIV risk through sharing injection equipment contaminated with HIV or engaging in high-risk behaviors, such as unprotected sex, when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- The presence of some sexually transmitted diseases greatly increases the likelihood of acquiring or transmitting HIV. Rates of gonorrhea and syphilis are higher among women of color than among white women.
- Socioeconomic issues associated with poverty, including limited access to high-quality health care; the exchange of sex for drugs, money, or to meet other needs; and higher levels of substance use can directly or indirectly increase HIV risk factors.

Florida

In Florida, HIV infection among adult women (ages 13+) accounted for only 11% of reported cases in 1987. That figure steadily rose to 29% in 2005, but then decreased, down to 20% in 2014.

As per Florida's adult population estimates for 2014, 59% of adult women were white, 15% were black, 22% were Hispanic and 4% were other races. In 2014, 1,254 HIV infection and 803 AIDS cases were reported among women. Blacks were over-represented, accounting for 69% of the AIDS cases and 62% of the HIV infection cases reported among women.

The proportion of HIV infection and AIDS cases among adult females reported in Florida by race/ethnicity, 2014

Race/Ethnicity	HIV infection		AIDS	
White	236	19%	125	16%
Black	780	62%	552	69%
Hispanic	218	17%	108	13%
American Indian	4	<1%	2	<1%
Asian	3	<1%	1	<1%

Women are most likely to be infected through high risk heterosexual contact, followed by injection drug use.

The Proportion of HIV and AIDS Cases Among Adult Females Reported in Florida by Mode of Exposure, 2014

Mode of Exposure	HIV infection		AIDS	
Injection Drug Use	120	10%	102	13%
Heterosexual Contact	1,122	89%	682	85%
Other Risk	12	1%	19	2%

Among adult women living with HIV disease through 2014, the majority (72%) were aged 40 or older. Also in 2014, 1 in 275 adult women were living in Florida with HIV disease, including 1 in 60 black women, 1 in 422 Hispanic women, 1 in 1,049 white women and 1 in 573 women of other races.

In 2014, HIV was the 5th leading cause of death among women between the ages of 25-44. By race/ethnicity for the same age group, HIV was the 9th leading cause among white females, the 3rd leading cause among black females and the 8th leading cause among Hispanic females.

According to both national and Florida data, the survival time from AIDS diagnosis to death is significantly shorter for females than males. Of the AIDS cases that died in Florida from 2007-2014, females had a median survival of 62 months from time of diagnosis to death compared with males who had 77 months.

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Data sources:

Florida data: FL Department of Health, Bureau of Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS Section
For more Florida data, go to http://floridaaids.org/ , then surveillance, then slide shows to find the slide set on women
U.S. data: HIV Surveillance Report, 2014 (most recent available) Vol. 26 (HIV data for all 50 states)
http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/index.htm
For national facts, go to: http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/index.htm or http://www.kff.org/hivaids/
Female specific U.S. data: HIV Surveillance among Women (Microsoft PowerPoint format) go to:
http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/library/slideSets/index.html

Florida HEALTH