

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

# WORLD AIDS DAY

**Contact:**

*Lydia George, PIO*

*lydia.george@flhealth.gov*

*863-578-2146*



**West Central, Fla—** For World AIDS Day on December 1<sup>st</sup>, county health departments in West Central Florida—Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota—want to provide facts about HIV/AIDS as well as let our communities know about services with regards to testing and treatment.

## **What Is HIV and AIDS?**

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If HIV is not treated, the disease can progress to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) which is the most advanced stage of HIV infection.

At this time, no cure has been found for HIV. But HIV is preventable and, for those who get HIV, it can be controlled with HIV treatment. People with HIV who are compliant with prescribed treatment can live a full healthy life and without spreading HIV to their partners.

## **How Does HIV Spread?**

HIV is most commonly spread by unprotected anal or vaginal sex and by sharing needles/syringes. It's only spread by direct contact with body fluids (blood, semen, rectal and vaginal fluids, and breast milk) of someone who has HIV.

## **Prevent HIV**

There are several ways to protect yourself and others from getting HIV. You should always use condoms correctly and you should use them every time you have anal or vaginal sex. You should avoid sharing needles and syringes. People at risk for getting HIV can take medication called prEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) that will prevent them from contracting HIV. There's also emergency medication called PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) that people can take within 72 hours of possible HIV exposure.

## **Living With HIV**

If you've been diagnosed with HIV, get into care as soon as possible and start taking your HIV medications as prescribed. If you do that, the HIV virus in your blood (the viral load) will, ideally, become undetectable. A person whose viral load is undetectable can't

transmit HIV to their partners via sex nor any other HIV transmission method.  
Undetectable equals untransmittable!

## Testing

The only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of regular health care and those with risk factors get tested more frequently. A general rule for those with risk factors is to get tested at least once a year.

For HIV testing and treatment, please call your local Florida Department of Health office:

DOH-Citrus	(352) 527-0068	DOH-Manatee	(941) 748-0747
DOH-Hardee	(863) 773-4161	DOH-Pasco	(727) 619-0260
DOH-Hernando	(352) 540-6800	DOH-Pinellas	(727) 824-6900
DOH-Highlands	(863) 386-6040	DOH-Polk	(863) 519-7900
DOH-Hillsborough	(813) 307-8000	DOH-Sarasota	(941) 861-2900

## World AIDS Day Events

- Citrus County offers no-cost, walk-in HIV testing on Thursday, December 1, 2022, from 9am-12pm at 3700 West Sovereign Path, Lecanto FL 34461.
- Hernando County offers no-cost HIV and hepatitis C testing every Monday from 8am–11am at the Spring Hill location and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month from 8am– 11am at the Brooksville location. Confidential; appointments required. Phone: 352-540-6800.
- Hillsborough County offers free HIV testing on Thursday, December 1, 2022, from 7:30am-3pm at University Area Clinic, 13601 N 22<sup>nd</sup> St, Tampa FL 33613. Diabetes testing, PrEP education, vaccines, and lunch will also be offered.
- Manatee County offers free HIV testing on Thursday, December 1, 2022, at 410 6<sup>th</sup> Ave E, Bradenton FL 34208 from 9am-3pm and at the Boys and Girls Club located at 1600 10<sup>th</sup> St W, Palmetto FL 34221 from 4pm-5:30pm.
- Manatee County also invites the community to the HIV Memorial Quilts display 11/30/22-12/2/22 at the DOH main building, WIC, and Vital Statistics.
- Pasco County offers free HIV testing with no appointment necessary:
  - Thursday, December 1, 2022, from 9am-3pm at 10841 Little Road, New Port Richey, FL 34654.
  - Friday, December 2, 2022, from 9am-3pm at 13941 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Dade City, FL 33525.
- Pinellas County, along with Pinellas Planning Partnership, invites the community to free festivities on December 3, 2022, from 1pm-5pm at The Sanderlin Center, 2335 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave S, St. Petersburg, FL 33712. For registration and more information, email [pinellasplanningpartnership@gmail.com](mailto:pinellasplanningpartnership@gmail.com).
- Polk County, along with New Life Praise & Worship Tabernacle, invites the community to a candlelight event at 1 Bobby Green Pl, Auburndale, FL 33823 from 5pm-6pm. Free HIV/STD testing will be offered.

## **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).