National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2023

This NWGHAAD, learn what all women need to know about HIV, including who is impacted most. Plus: Download prevention and self-care activity books.

March 10, 2023 By Trent Straube

Friday, March 10, marks the 18th annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD) 2023. Organized by the Office on Women's Health, a dvision of the Department of Health & Human Services, the event offers a time to highlight the HIV epidemic's impact on women.

NWGHAAD is important, according to the Office of Women's Health, because "HIV and AIDS are still widespread public health issues, and women continue to remain vulnerable to infection—especially African-American and Hispanic women. In fact, any woman who has sex can get HIV, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation."

> Did you know that women account for nearly 1 in 5 new HIV diagnoses in the United States? We need to work together to reduce the stigma and increase access to testing, prevention, and treatment for all. Let's show our support for women and girls affected by HIV/AIDS.
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> #NWGHAAD pic.twitter.com/H4tl7ws4S1
>
> — TCCHealth (@TheChautCenter) March 10, 2023

On its website, the Office of Women's Health offers a tool kit and facts that every woman and girl needs to know about HIV and AIDS. For example: Fact #8: "If you are pregnant and living with HIV,

you can take HIV medicine and work with a doctor to stay healthy. If you take medicine, the risk of passing HIV to your baby is less than 1%."

In 2020, about 1.1 million people were living with HIV in the United States, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That same year, 30,635 people were diagnosed with HIV, and 18% of those cases—about 1 out of 5—were among women. But there are disparities. Black women accounted for 54% of new diagnoses among women, while making up only 14% of the population of women in the country.

What's more, among women living with HIV, Black women had the lowest rate (62%) of viral suppression. Not only do people living with HIV who maintain viral suppression—also referred to an undetectable viral load—experience healthier outcomes, but they also don't transmit HIV via sex, a fact referred to as Undetectable Equals Untransmittable, or U=U.

> If you have HIV, becoming and staying undetectable is one of the best things you can do to stay healthy, and it means you won't transmit HIV to your sexual partner. Learn more: https://t.co/0KhQXUe03I. #NWGHAAD #StopHIVTogether #UequalsU #WinWinAgenda @CDC_HIV @APPG_HIV_AIDS pic.twitter.com/8dd5irlLz9
>
> — Prevention Access (@PreventionAC) March 10, 2023

To find events and information about women and HIV, search #NWGHAAD on social media. You'll find posts such as those embedded in this article. For example, in honor of International Women's Day, held each March 8, and NWGHAAD, the Positive Women's Network–USA (PWN-USA) held a discussion of PWN's origin, herstory and founding. You can watch that informative and inspiring Zoom video in the group's Facebook post below:

In another example, ViiV Healthcare's Risk to Reason initiative, which focuses on HIV among Black cisgender and transgender women, has released a series of activity books about self-care and HIV prevention. You can read and download the books here and via the Facebook post below:

AIDSVu, which creates interactive maps, sharable infographics and educational posts about HIV-related data, offers a tool kit for NWGHAAD 2023 and an interview with Whitney S. Rice, DrPH,

MPH, an assistant professor at Emory Rollins School of Public Health, about the social determinants of health among women.

Noting that the theme of this year's NWGHAAD is "Prevention and Testing at Every Age. Care and Treatment at Every Stage" (the same as last year), AIDSVu spotlights HIV prevention data among women, notably the uptake of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), the daily pills and long-acting injectables that prevent people from acquiring HIV.

"A critical aspect of HIV prevention is access to and awareness of PrEP as an HIV prevention tool, but women continue to have lower rates of PrEP use relative to their need," writes to AIDSVu. "In 2021, for example, women made up only 8% (28,852) of PrEP users, despite representing 18% (6,552) of all new HIV diagnoses in the U.S."

> Today is National Women & Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. In the United States, about 23% of people living with HIV are women and, in 2019, women made up 18 percent of new diagnoses. Learn more at https://t.co/G1gAkTUOVP #NWGHAAD #movhd #midohiovalley #stayhealthymov pic.twitter.com/p5Ekzq8C6h
>
> — MOVHealthDept (@MOVHealthDept) March 10, 2023

To learn more about other HIV awareness days, including a calendar you can download and print, visit "2023 HIV/AIDS Awareness Days." For POZ articles related to NWGHAAD, click #Women. You'll find articles such as:

- "Can Women Living With HIV Safely Breastfeed Their Babies? [VIDEO] ,"
- "Women Are Missing From HIV Treatment Trials,"
- "R.I.P. Lesbian AIDS Activists Mary Lucey and Nancy Jean MacNeil" and

- “Women Are Aware of PrEP, but Few Are Using It.”

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