

Community Health Coalition, Inc.

407 Crutchfield Street P. O. Box 15176

Durham, NC 27704

Tel: (919) 470-8680 Fax: (919) 470-8688

Website: www.chealthc.org Email: healthcoali@aol.com

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Healthy Sunday Topic: HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS remains one of the leading causes of deaths in the country and in the world. Durham County has the 4th highest rate of HIV in North Carolina and African American women in the Raleigh - Durham area are five times more likely to get the disease than in most other areas of the country. North Carolina is among the 10 U.S. states with the highest rates of new HIV and AIDS diagnoses and HIV-related deaths, based on data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). As a community, we need to work together to reduce the rate of infection.

Following the footsteps of President Obama, we can help by getting involved and staying informed.

Dr. Rosemary Jackson, Medical Director of Student Health at North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC says, "Our communities remain at risk for HIV infection. It is up to all of us to stay informed and involved with local efforts to reduce transmission through education, testing and treatment. Do not let the fear of any perceived stigma keep you from knowing your status and doing the right things for your personal health, loved ones and your community. Make a choice you can live with."



Rosemary Jackson, MD, MPH

Risk Factors for HIV

Sexual - Unprotected sex with multiple partners or unprotected sex with persons known to have or be at a high risk for HIV infection.

Injection drug use - In addition to being at risk from sharing unclean needles, casual & chronic illegal substance users may be more likely to engage in unprotected sex under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol.



Risk Factors for HIV continued...

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) - The presence of certain STDs can significantly increase one's chances of contracting HIV infection.

Lack of awareness of HIV- In a recent study of men, who have sex with men (MSM) in five cities, 46% of the black MSM were HIV positive and 67% of those men were unaware of their infection. **Stigma-** a "negative social label that identifies people as deviant" also puts too many African American communities at a high risk of infection. Many at risk for HIV infection fear stigma more than knowing their status, choosing instead to hide their high-risk behavior rather than seek counseling and testing. Therefore they continue to be at risk and may infect others.

Prevention of HIV/AIDS: Remember the ABCDs



A=Abstinence from sexual activity until marriage

B=Be faithful in a marital and monogamous relationship

C=Condoms, always use protection.

D=Drugs, don't use them, especially IV drugs or drugs with needles

For more information:

www.aids.gov

<http://www.cdc.gov/ActAgainstAIDS/>

www.aidshealth.org

www.caare-inc.org

Health Tip is a message from **Community Health Coalition, Inc.** and is written in partnership with Central Carolina Black Nurses' Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, and Duke Regional Hospital.

REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!