



Filipinos represent **one-third** of total Asian American and Pacific Islander AIDS cases in California, **nearly three times greater than any other AAPI group.** Compared to other Asian Americans, **Filipinos have the greatest number of deaths due to AIDS, with gay/bisexual men representing the highest number of cases within the Filipino community.**

The silence and avoidance around the issue of HIV and AIDS in the Filipino community contributes to an increase in HIV infections.

What is HIV?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). If you are infected, HIV gradually weakens your immune system so that your body is unable to protect itself against other diseases, such as pneumonia or even a common cold.

What is AIDS?

AIDS is the most severe stage of HIV infection and can take ten or more years to develop. AIDS breaks down your immune system leaving you vulnerable to many serious infections that take advantage of your body's weakened defenses and can cause death.

How Is HIV Transmitted?

Three factors must be present:

1. HIV must be present in certain body fluids such as blood, semen and vaginal fluids.
2. A sufficient quantity of HIV must exist in these fluids.
3. HIV must be introduced directly into the blood stream through unprotected sex or through cuts, tears, or punctures in the skin.

Have You...

- Had unprotected sex (i.e., sex without using a latex condom) with an HIV-positive partner or a person whose HIV status is unknown?
- Shared needles to inject drugs, steroids, vitamins, or get a tattoo or piercing?
- Had a sexually transmitted disease (STD)?
- Used alcohol or drugs before having sex (affecting your judgment so you're less likely to use condoms or use them correctly)?

If so, you may have put yourself at risk for getting HIV. It's not a matter of who you are, it's what you do that will make you vulnerable to HIV infection.

Some people have gotten HIV from blood transfusions or blood products. If you received a blood transfusion in the U.S. before 1985, you may be at risk. Blood transfusions received in another country in any year may still place you at risk.

Anyone with HIV, whether they have symptoms or feel fine, can still transmit the virus to others.

How Is HIV Not Transmitted?

It is important not to believe in the myths about transmission of HIV. For example, HIV cannot be transmitted through: eating utensils (chopsticks, forks, spoons, knives, etc.); toilet seats; insect bites; drinking fountains or swimming pools; saliva, tears or sweat; shaking hands or hugging; coughing and sneezing.

Be educated on what's safe and what's not.

To fight this disease, we need to educate ourselves about the risks and how we can prevent HIV from spreading in our community.

Get Tested for HIV

Don't avoid getting tested for HIV because you're afraid of what the result might be. If you don't find out now, it could be worse later. Knowing your HIV status empowers you to make important decisions for your health and your life. The sooner you find out, the better your chances are to stay negative or to fight HIV and take good care of yourself.

For more information about AIDS or HIV testing, call the **California AIDS Hotline**
1-800-367-AIDS (2437)
Services are available in English, Filipino and Spanish.

Agency
information
here

This brochure is provided by the California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS, in collaboration with Nakatomi & Associates, Inc., the California AIDS Clearinghouse, the Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team (APAIT) and Barangay, The Gay Filipino Association of Los Angeles.

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Risky Situations

Sometimes, we can make unhealthy decisions. Certain circumstances can put you at greater risk for getting HIV:

- going home with someone after going out to a club, bar, or party and having unprotected sex.
- chatting online that leads to meeting someone and having unprotected sex.
- getting high on alcohol or drugs and having unprotected sex.

Risk can happen in any situation.

Remember that you have the responsibility and control over whether or not you become infected with HIV.

Play It Safe

When you're intimate with someone the best ways to lower your risk against getting HIV are:

- understanding how HIV is transmitted and how you can protect yourself and your loved ones
- talking with your partner about experiences with past partners and injection drug use and asking if he's ever been tested for HIV or other STDs
- using latex condoms properly and consistently (with only water-based lubrication)
- using unlubricated latex condoms for oral sex
- being in a monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner

Proper use of a condom will help protect you against HIV.

What Is an HIV Test?

An HIV test is a simple blood or oral test to see if you are infected with HIV. The test looks for HIV antibodies that your body produces if you are infected. When you take your HIV test, you will talk with an HIV test counselor confidentially to assess your risk for HIV infection and develop a plan to reduce your risk.

Then, you will schedule a return visit to receive your results, usually one to two weeks later. **It is important that you return for your test results.** Knowing your HIV status is a step towards taking care of yourself.

What Happens When I Find Out My Results?

If your result is negative, it means you are not infected with HIV. Or in some circumstances, it could mean that you were recently infected but your body has not had enough time to develop antibodies because you are in the "window period." Most people develop antibodies within 12 weeks; however, the window period can be up to six months from the time of infection before enough antibodies are present to produce an accurate result.

If your result is positive, it means you are infected with HIV and can also infect other people if you have unprotected sex or share needles. Your HIV test counselor can provide referrals to help you receive early medical care, learn about treatments that could prevent or delay the onset of AIDS, and help you maintain your health and quality of life.

Where Can I Take an HIV Test?

To find the test site nearest you, call the California AIDS Hotline at 1-800-367-2437. There are different kinds of test sites, so find out whether anonymous or confidential tests are offered.

When you take an anonymous test, you will receive a code number and that is the only way you will be identified. Your name is not on any records.

When you take a confidential test, you will be asked to sign a consent form to take the test. Your name will appear on the results. However, your medical record will be kept confidential.

Call to see if you need an appointment. Most sites offer free or low-cost testing. A home test collection kit is another option and can be purchased from drug stores.

Wherever you choose to test, your result will remain discreet and confidential.

Filipinos are

not immune.

