

ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULT HIV AND AIDS

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a disease that destroys cells that are critical to a healthy immune system. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is diagnosed when HIV has weakened the immune system enough that the body has difficulty fighting disease and infections. HIV prevention is a particularly important issue for adolescents and young adults, as these groups experience the majority of new HIV infections. In 2009, those aged 15–29 accounted for 39 percent of all new HIV infections in the U.S., while this age group represented 21 percent of the U.S. population in 2010.⁶² Early age at sexual initiation, unprotected sex, drug use, older sex partners and lack of awareness places adolescents at an increased risk of contracting HIV.

In 2009, more than 37,000 adolescents and young adults between 13–24 years of age were living with a diagnosed HIV infection. Between 2007 and 2010, the rate of diagnosed HIV infection remained stable for younger adolescents (aged 13–14 years) while increasing for those aged 15–24 years (data not shown). A similar pattern by age group was observed for the rate of AIDS diagnosis, with rates increasing for those aged 15–24 years. In 2009, 11,094 persons aged 13–24 years were living with an AIDS diagnosis. Between 2007 and 2009, the rate of deaths with an AIDS diagnosis remained stable for the U.S.

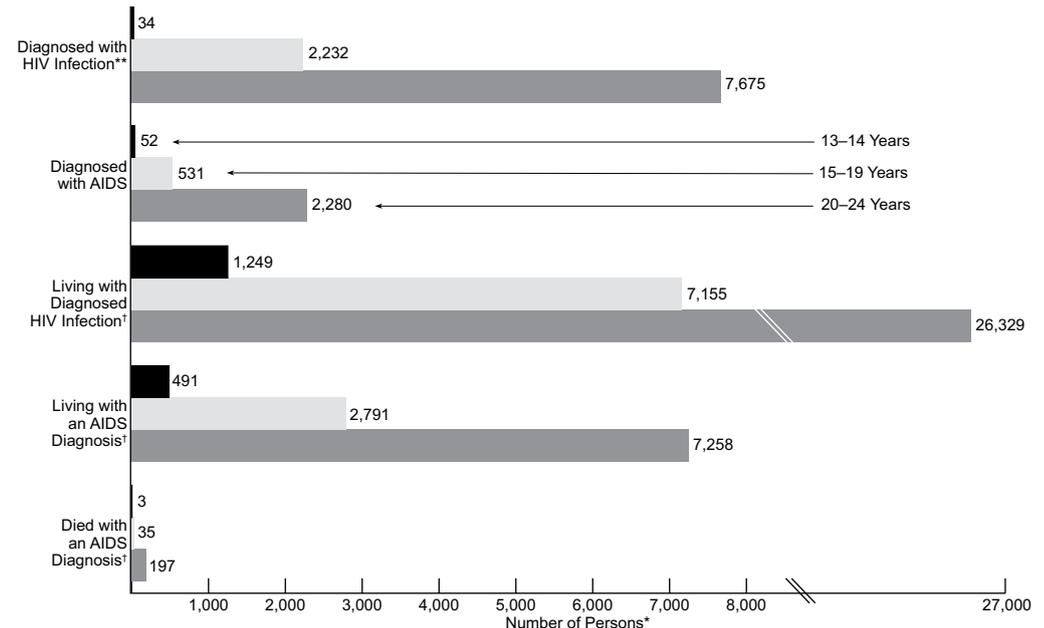
population as a whole, but increased among persons aged 20–24 years (data not shown).

Abstaining from sex and drug use is the most effective way to avoid HIV infection. Adolescents and young adults can also reduce their risks by informing themselves of how to negotiate safer sex, where to get tested for HIV, and

how to use a condom correctly. The CDC has developed interventions that can be carried out locally to help reduce the risk to adolescents. One such program, *Choosing Life: Empowerment! Action! Results!*, is for those older than 16 years of age and living with HIV infection or AIDS or at high risk for HIV.⁶³

Selected Data on HIV* and AIDS Among Adolescents and Young Adults, by Age, 2009

Source (II.18): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HIV Surveillance Report, 2010



*Estimated numbers reflect statistical adjustment for reporting delays and missing risk-factor information, but not for incomplete reporting. Data for United States and dependent areas. **Estimates for 2010. †Estimates for 2009.