



Facts About...

HIV/AIDS in Young People

SUMMARY: Of King County residents diagnosed with HIV, 2% were adolescents age 15-19 years, and 10% were young adults 20-24 years old. Since 1995, an average of five teens and 28 young adults were diagnosed with HIV each year. Compared with young adults, HIV-infected teens 15-19 years old are more likely to be female and/or to acquire infection heterosexually, and less likely to be men who have sex with men (MSM). Young MSM have high levels of risky sexual behavior, and about 5% of 23-29 year old MSM are HIV-infected.

STATUS AND TRENDS IN HIV/AIDS CASES:

- There were 5,699 King County residents living with HIV or AIDS and reported to Public Health-Seattle & King County at the end of September 2005. At the time of diagnosis of HIV infection, fewer than 1% were younger than 15 years old, 2% were 15-19 years old, 10% were 20-24 years old, 19% were 25-29 years old, 44% were 30-39 years old, 19% were 40-49 years old, and 5% were 50 or older.
- Among people aged 15-19 years old when diagnosed with HIV, 47% were MSM, 27% injected drugs including 17% who were MSM who also injected drugs, 13% had heterosexual risk, and 4% were infected from blood products received before screening began in 1985 (Table 1).

Table 1: King County Residents by Age of First HIV Diagnosis, Reported as of 9/2005

	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years
Sex			
Male	72%	87%	89%
Female	28%	13%	11%
Race/Ethnicity			
White	70%	66%	71%
African American	16%	17%	15%
Hispanic	10%	11%	10%
Asian & Pacific Islander	3%	3%	3%
Native American	1%	2%	1%
Exposure Category			
Male-male sex	47%	65%	72%
Injection drug (IDU)	10%	6%	4%
Male-male/IDU	17%	12%	10%
Heterosexual sex	13%	10%	7%
Transfusion / hemophilia	4%	2%	<1%
Undetermined/other	9%	6%	6%
Total Cases	105	579	1,110

POPULATION SIZES:

- The King County 2000 Census for persons age 15-19 is 108,261; for ages 20-24 it is 116,597.
- The estimated King County population of gay or bisexual males age 15-24 is 9,500 people.

HIV PREVALENCE (currently living with HIV):

- King County residents currently living with HIV include an estimated 20 who are 15-19 years old, and 120 who are 20-24 years old.
- Fewer than 0.02% of teens age 15-19, and 0.1% of young adults age 20-24 are infected with HIV. This 5-fold increased infection rate by 20-24 years of age demonstrates the importance of prevention during the years when young adults become sexually active.

- Several anonymous surveys have been conducted to determine HIV prevalence (percentage of people currently infected with HIV) in several specific populations in King County. Each survey and data source has unique features, and results cannot be extrapolated to the general population. These surveys are summarized in Table 2:

Table 2: Anonymous HIV Prevalence Surveys Among Youths, 1993-2002

Source of data, year(s)	Population	Age in years	HIV+/ No. tested	% HIV+
AIDS Prevention Program, 1996-2000	HIV testing, mostly MSM	<20	27/1122	2.4
		20-24	282/4413	6.4
STD Clinic, 1996-1999	STI testing	<20	0/483	0.0
		20-29	14/2783	0.5
Drug Treatment Centers, selected facilities 1997-1999	Mostly (90%) IDU	<25	2/127	1.6
		25-29	2/235	0.9
Youth Clinic Survey, 1993	Clinic patients	<25	2/138	1.4
Adolescent Clinic Survey, 1993-1994	Clinic patients	13-22	2/628	0.3
Childbearing Women Survey, 1989-1994	Women giving birth	<20	7/8,708	0.1
Young Men's Survey, 1997-1998	MSM	15-18	0/85	0.0
		19-22	5/201	2.5
Young Men's Survey, 1998-2000	MSM	23-29	22/462	4.7
Job Corps, 1993-1997 (Seattle MSA)*	Unemployed	16-24	2/2,180	0.1
Military Recruitment Centers, 1985-2001 (Seattle MSA)*	Military recruits	<20	2/24,111	<0.1
		20-24	9/13,641	0.1

* The Seattle MSA includes King, Snohomish and Island counties

- HIV prevalence among MSM 23-29 years of age was estimated by the Young Men's Survey conducted in six US cities in 1998-2000. Prevalence ranged from a low of 5% in Seattle to a high of 18% in Dallas.

RISK BEHAVIORS IN YOUNG GAY MALES:

- The Seattle-area Young Men's Survey in 1997-1998 showed that of MSM who had anal sex in the past six months, 53% of MSM aged 15-18 years had sex without a condom compared to 64% of people aged 19-22 years, and 62% of those aged 23-29 years.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR HIV PREVENTION:

- Diagnosis of a sexually transmitted infection (STI) indicates unsafe sexual behavior. The presence of an STI also increases the risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV. Young people continue to have the highest rates of STIs. In King County, the 2004 chlamydia rate was 1,550 per 100,000 for teens aged 15-19 years, four times the rate among people aged 30-34 years (384 per 100,000).
- Results from risk behavior surveys provide important information about behaviors that may place young people at risk for HIV infection. The Seattle Public Schools 1999 Teen Health Risk Survey showed that 40% of high school students have had sex. Of those reporting sex in the previous three months, 61% had sex without a condom at least once during that time. Also, one percent of Seattle high school students said they were homosexual, 3% bisexual, 90% heterosexual, and 6% were unsure.
- The Seattle-area Young Men's Study (1994-2000) found that 55% of young MSM aged 15-22 years did not readily disclose that they were sexually attracted to other men. MSM who do not disclose their sexual orientation are also less likely to seek HIV testing, and are therefore often unaware of their HIV status.