

# TEXT MESSAGING

## What is text messaging?

Text messaging, or texting, is a way to send information to and from cellular and smart phone devices. Messages can be sent as text (Short Message Service or SMS), or pictures, video, and audio (Multimedia Messaging Service or MMS). A text message can be sent to individual mobile phones or multiple phones. Texting is one of the ways people are using mobile technology in public health.






## Who is using text messaging?

- Texting by adults has increased from 65% of adults sending and receiving texts in September 2009 to 72% texting in May 2010; and
- African American and Hispanic send more text messages, on average, than whites, with a median of ten texts a day for African Americans and Hispanics, and five texts a day for whites.<sup>1</sup>
- More than half of teens text on a daily basis. One in three teens sends more than 100 text messages a day, or 3,000 texts a month.<sup>2</sup>




## Text messaging in response to HIV

- Locate local HIV testing centers.
- Respond to questions about HIV.
- Remind patients of medical appointments.
- Help patients adhere to their medication schedules.
- Encourage people to get tested for HIV through peer networks.
- Fundraise for AIDS service organizations and community-based organizations.


## Examples from the field


- KNOWIT connects people to local HIV testing sites across the U.S.: [www.kff.org/hivaids/philip113007nr.cfm](http://www.kff.org/hivaids/philip113007nr.cfm) 
- Get Yourself Tested (GYT) helps people locate nearby STI testing centers: [www.itsyoursexlife.com/gyt](http://www.itsyoursexlife.com/gyt) 
- SexInfo provides sexual health information for youth in San Francisco: [www.sexinfosf.org](http://www.sexinfosf.org) 
- REALtalk provides information to youth in Washington DC about where to access free HIV/STI testing and free condoms: [www.realtalkdc.org](http://www.realtalkdc.org) 
- CareSpeak and Everyday Health developed a mobile application to remind patients to take their HIV medications: <http://www.carespeak.com/Docs/CareSpeakPR09272010.pdf> 

## Where can I learn more about text messaging?

- Texting4Health: [www.texting4health.org](http://www.texting4health.org) 
- United Nations Foundation's "Wireless Technology for Social Change": [www.unfoundation.org/vodafone/communications\\_publication\\_series.asp](http://www.unfoundation.org/vodafone/communications_publication_series.asp) 
- WikiHow's "How to Send a Text Message": [www.wikihow.com/Send-a-Text-Message](http://www.wikihow.com/Send-a-Text-Message) 
- AIDS.gov's New Media Toolkit: [www.aids.gov/using-new-media/tools/text-messaging](http://www.aids.gov/using-new-media/tools/text-messaging)

<sup>1</sup> Pew Internet & American Life Project, "Adults, Cell Phones and Texting," <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1716/adults-cell-phones-text-messages>  Accessed on 12/14/10.

<sup>2</sup> Pew Internet & American Life Project, "Teens, Cell Phones and Texting," <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1572/teens-cell-phones-text-messages>  Accessed on 12/14/10.

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email: [contact@AIDS.gov](mailto:contact@AIDS.gov)

 [www.twitter.com/AIDSgov](http://www.twitter.com/AIDSgov)

 [www.facebook.com/AIDS.gov](http://www.facebook.com/AIDS.gov)

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