



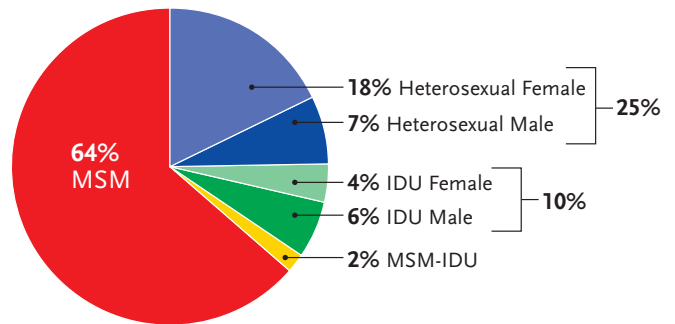
# HIV and AIDS among Latinos

HIV is a serious health threat to Latino communities in the United States. Because there is no single Latino culture in the U.S., the factors driving the epidemic in this population are as diverse as the communities themselves. While prevention efforts have helped to maintain stability in the overall level of new HIV infections among Latinos for more than a decade, this population continues to be affected by HIV at far too high a level.

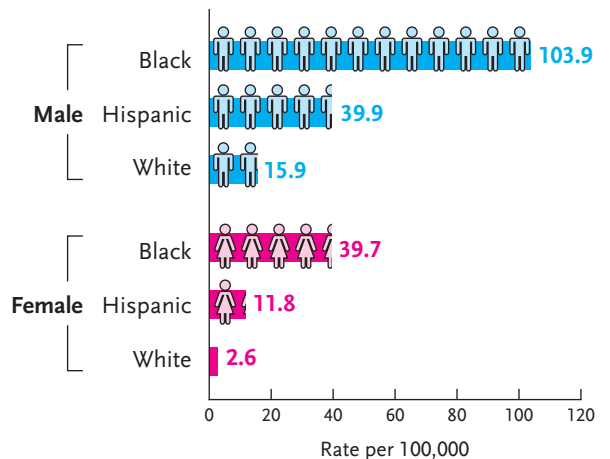
## A Snapshot

- ▶ Although the number of new infections among Latinos has been lower than that of whites and blacks, Latinos bear a disproportionate burden of the HIV epidemic.
- ▶ Hispanics represent approximately 16 percent of the U.S. population and the latest CDC estimates show that they account for more than 17 percent of people living with HIV in the U.S. (205,400 persons), and an estimated 20 percent of new infections each year (9,400 infections).
- ▶ Approximately one in 36 Hispanic men will be diagnosed with HIV during their lifetime, as will one in 106 Hispanic women.
- ▶ Men account for more than three-quarters (79 percent) of new infections among Hispanics. Women account for 21 percent.
- ▶ The rate of new HIV infections among Hispanic men is almost three times that among white men, with gay and bisexual men particularly affected.
  - Most new infections among Hispanic men (81 percent) occur among men who have sex with men (MSM).<sup>1</sup>
  - In a study of 21 major U.S. cities in 2008, approximately 18 percent of Hispanic MSM were infected. Among those who were HIV-infected, nearly half (46 percent) were unaware that they were infected.
- ▶ The rate of new HIV infections among Hispanic women is more than four times that of white women.
- ▶ AIDS continues to claim the lives of too many Latino men and women. Since the beginning of the epidemic, more than 89,000 Hispanics with AIDS have died.

Estimated New HIV Infections among Hispanics, 2009, by Transmission Category



Estimated Rate of New HIV Infections, 2009, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity



<sup>1</sup> The term men who have sex with men is used in CDC surveillance systems. It indicates the behaviors that transmit HIV infection, rather than how individuals self-identify in terms of their sexuality.



## Complex Factors Increase Risk

- ▶ **Socioeconomic factors:** The social and economic realities of some Latinos' lives can increase HIV risk, including poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to healthcare. Language barriers may also affect the quality of care.
- ▶ **Stigma:** The stigma associated with HIV and homosexuality may help to spread HIV in Latino communities. In some communities, the cultural value of machismo may create reluctance to acknowledge sensitive, yet risky behaviors, such as male-to-male sexual contact and substance abuse. Fear of disclosing risk behavior or sexual orientation may prevent Latinos from seeking testing, treatment and prevention services, and support from friends and family. As a result, too many Latinos lack critical information about how to prevent infection.
- ▶ **Cultural factors:** There is no single Latino culture in the United States. Research shows that Latinos born in different countries have different behavioral risk factors for HIV. For example, data suggest that Hispanics born in Puerto Rico are more likely than other Hispanics to contract HIV as a result of injection drug use or high-risk heterosexual contact. By contrast, sexual contact with other men is the primary cause of HIV infection among men born in places such as Mexico and the United States.
- ▶ **High prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and higher rates of HIV:** Data show that the burden of STDs among Latinos is high. Because STDs can place individuals at higher risk for HIV infection, high STD prevalence may contribute to higher HIV incidence among Latino men and women. Additionally, disproportionate rates of HIV among Latinos and the current high prevalence of HIV in Latino communities increases the likelihood that Latinos will encounter an HIV-infected sex or drug-injecting partner, placing them at greater risk.

## HIV: Protect Yourself

Be smart about HIV. Here's what you can do to reduce your risk of infection:

**Get the facts** — Arm yourself with basic information: Are you at risk? How is HIV spread? How can you protect yourself?

**Take control** — You have the facts; now protect yourself and your loved ones. There are three essential ways to reduce your risk:

1. Don't have sex (i.e., anal, vaginal or oral)
2. Only have sex (i.e., anal, vaginal or oral) if you're in a mutually monogamous relationship with a partner you know is not infected
3. Use a condom every time you have anal, vaginal or oral sex. (Correct and consistent use of the male latex condom is highly effective in reducing HIV transmission.)

**Put yourself to the test** — Knowing your HIV status is a critical step toward stopping HIV transmission, because if you know you are infected, you can take steps to protect

your partners. Also, if you are infected, the sooner you find out, the sooner you can receive life-extending treatment. In fact, CDC recommends that all adults and adolescents be tested for HIV. Because other STDs can play a role in the acquisition of HIV, knowing whether you are infected with either is critical in reducing your risk for infection.

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit [www.hivtest.org](http://www.hivtest.org) to find HIV and STD testing locations near you.

**Start talking** — Talk to everyone you know about HIV — friends and family, coworkers and neighbors, at work and at places of worship. Have ongoing and open discussions with your partners about HIV testing and risk behaviors. Talking openly about HIV can reduce the stigma that keeps too many from seeking the testing, prevention and treatment services, and support they need.

**HIV doesn't have to become part of your life. Each of us can and must be part of the solution.**

Visit [www.actagainstaids.org](http://www.actagainstaids.org) for more information about HIV and what you can do to stop HIV.

**If you are a member of the news media and need more information, please visit [www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/Newsroom](http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/Newsroom) or contact the News Media Line at CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (404-639-8895 or [NCHHSTPMediaTeam@cdc.gov](mailto:NCHHSTPMediaTeam@cdc.gov)).**