

Health Bulletin



HIV: New Challenges For Women And Older Americans

(NAPS)—Information is an important part of a healthy lifestyle at any age. That's one reason experts say you are never too old to learn about your health—particularly when it comes to AIDS and HIV.

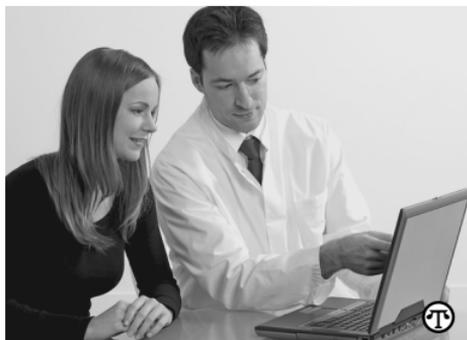
AIDS takes about 10 years from the time of initial infection to diagnosis. As a result, it's possible for someone to be unaware of the risk he or she faces for years. Thus the need for early testing and detection.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 13 percent of new HIV diagnoses occur in the age group 50–64, with women over the age of 60 at higher levels.

It's suspected that the availability and usage of drugs for men with erectile dysfunction have contributed to the increased incidence of unprotected sex with partners who are HIV positive, resulting in transmission back to their regular and/or new sexual partners.

In the past, many people thought HIV was something that only concerned those who were members of a high-risk behavior group, such as injection drug users or homosexual men. That meant, for many, just getting an HIV test was associated with some degree of stigma.

Unfortunately, data show that older people don't think they have a chance of being infected, so they get diagnosed later in the course of the disease. Because they are diagnosed later, they respond less



While HIV diagnoses are becoming more common in older women, in terms of overall numbers, younger women will be more greatly impacted.

well to the therapy since their disease is already further along. It's a part of the reason that screening is now recommended for people up to age 64 on a routine basis.

To make this an easier process, there is a new “rapid” test that can give results in about 20 minutes, versus the other test standard that can take as much as two weeks to get an answer based on the system used.

Some say a valuable resource for information on this and other health issues is a Web site called The Prostate Net. The site is expanding coverage of men's and community health matters to address issues such as early HIV screening, testing for diabetes and other health conditions. Visit the site at www.theprostatenet.com.

For more information on finding a test location, call 1-800-CDC-INFO or, on the Web, go to www.hivtest.org.