



## **December is AIDS Awareness Month**

HIV is a virus that destroys the immune system and weakens the body's ability to fight disease and infection. HIV usually progresses to AIDS. This makes the virus the most dangerous sexually transmitted infection today. It is the fifth leading cause of death for persons under 40 years old.

According to AIDS.gov, more than one million Americans are living with HIV, but one in five of them are not aware they are infected. While the total number of people with HIV in the United States has increased recently, the annual number of new infections has remained relatively stable.

In the early 1980s when the AIDS epidemic began, people living with HIV were not likely to live more than a few years. However, since 1996, the use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) has dramatically improved the quality of life for people with HIV.

ART prevents the HIV virus from multiplying inside a person, helps the body's immune cells live longer, lowers a person's risk of developing a non-HIV-related illness, and reduces the chances of transmitting HIV to others.

## **WORLDS AIDS DAY IS DECEMBER 1, 2017 THE 2017 THEME IS "INCREASING IMPACT THROUGH TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PARTNERSHIPS"**

World AIDS Day takes place on the 1st December each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day. World AIDS Day is important because it reminds the public and government that HIV has not gone away – there is still a vital need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education.

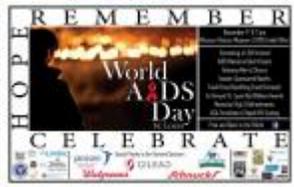
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 36.7 million people across the globe are living with HIV/AIDS. The illnesses claim more than 1 million lives each year, the agency said.

However, the World Health Organization noted that in 2015 the epidemic claimed fewer lives than it had at any point in nearly two decades. Health officials credited the expanded use of antiretroviral therapy, which has brought the number of HIV-related deaths down by 45 percent since 2005.

Health officials estimate that 2.1 million people are newly infected by HIV annually, a majority of who live in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the large number, the World Health Organization said the number of new infections was at its lowest point in the last 25 years.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### World AIDS Day 2017



**World AIDS Day** is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We invite you to join us on **Friday, December 1, from 3pm–7pm** as we remember those who have lost their battle with HIV/AIDS with a display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt and recognize individuals who exemplify dedication to the HIV/AIDS community by presenting the St. Louis region's first Red Ribbon Awards. Our community partners will offer booth exhibits that demonstrate their initiative and area of expertise in the field. In addition, a screening of the film *Still Around* will be accompanied by the **Gateway Men's Chorus**. Free rapid HIV testings will be offered. Light hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic beverages will be served.

*Presented in collaboration with the Washington University School of Medicine Infectious Diseases Clinic and the St. Louis Region World AIDS Day Committee.*

**When:** Friday, December 1 2017 at 3:00 pm  
**Where:** Throughout the Museum  
**How Much:** Free  
Missouri History Museum, Lindell and DeBaliviere in Forest Park  
mohistory.org

### **SOURCES:**

<https://www.worldaidsday.org/about>  
<http://www.drexelmedicine.org/patient-services/infectious-diseases/more-about-infectious-disease-and-hiv-care/december-is-aids-awareness-month/>  
<http://www.whio.com/lifestyles/health/world-aids-day-2016-officials-push-for-testing-awareness/vctiyDj7IKfgxka2R1foCI/>  
<http://www.stlouisco.com/HealthandWellness/Health/HIV>  
<https://mohistory.org/node/59326>