World AIDS Day - Free HIV Testing

World AIDS Day, held Dec. 1 each year, is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV/AIDS, show their support for people living with the disease, and to commemorate the lives of people who have died from complications associated with the disease.

According to AIDS.gov, 33.4 million people worldwide are living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the disease that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). More than 25 million people have died from AIDS since 1981 when the disease was first reported, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

Today, many scientific advances have been made in HIV treatment and we understand the condition more so than ever before. Despite this, there are many people who do not know the facts about HIV/AIDS or how to protect themselves, and stigmas still associated with the disease discourage many from getting tested and learning about their status. World AIDS Day is important as it reminds the world that AIDS has not gone away — there is still a vital need to fund AIDS research, increase awareness, fight prejudice, and improve education.

On Monday, Dec. 2, 2013 from 2-4 p.m., in honor of World AIDS Day, CCBOH hosted a Free HIV Testing Event. Free HIV Testing will also be offered every Wednesday this month from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with the exception of Christmas Day. Rapid HIV Testing is offered to anyone ages 13 years or older, regardless of residency status. Results are typically returned in 20 minutes. Get tested and help safeguard yourself and your community from HIV/AIDS. For more information, contact Tricea Dawkins at (678) 479-2225 or triceadawkins@dhr.state.ga.us.

HIV/AIDS in the Community

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) HIV Surveillance Unit reports that the number of reported HIV cases in Clayton County has steadily increased in recent years. In 2010, the number of persons living with HIV infection (not AIDS) was 949 (345.8 per 100,000 persons), which increased to 1,678 (642 per 100,000 persons) in 2011, and to 1,818 (684 per 100,000 persons) in 2012.

In 2010, Georgia was ranked sixth highest in the nation for total number of adults and adolescents living with HIV infection. As of Dec. 31, 2012, that number was 50,436, which represents a 53 percent increase from 2005, which had 33,025 reported cases. Among the 18 public health districts of Georgia, Fulton and DeKalb counties had the highest numbers and rates of HIV infection and AIDS.

In 2012, almost two-thirds (64 percent) of the persons in Georgia living with HIV infection resided in the metropolitan Atlanta area, which includes Clayton County. Seventy-eight percent of those diagnosed with HIV infection in Georgia in 2012 were male and 22 percent were female. The highest number of new HIV infections in 2012 occurred in persons 30-39 and 40-49 years of age, of which 55 percent were African American. Among all male adults, 63 percent of new HIV infections were seen among men who have sex with men, and heterosexual contact accounted for 61 percent of new HIV infections among all female adults.

Source: http://dph.georgia.gov/data-fact-sheet-summaries

HIV: How to Protect Yourself

While some groups are more at risk than others, anyone can become infected with HIV. Here are some things you can do to reduce your risk of infection:

- **Get the facts and take control** - Arm yourself with basic information.
- **Abstinence** - The most reliable way to avoid infection is to abstain from sex (anal, vaginal, or oral)
- **Mutual monogamy** - Mutual monogamy means that you agree to be sexually active with only one person, who has agreed to be sexually active only with you. Being in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner is one of the most reliable ways to avoid HIV infection.
- **Reduce your number of sex partners** - Reducing your number of sex partners can decrease your risk of HIV. It is still important to get tested for HIV and share the test results with your partner.
- **Condoms** - Correct and consistent use of the male latex condom is highly effective in reducing HIV transmission. Use a condom every time you engage in anal, vaginal, or oral sex.

HIV can also be transmitted by injecting illicit drugs (drugs not prescribed by your doctor) through needles, syringes, and other methods if they are contaminated with the blood of someone who has the virus. Don’t let it happen to you.

For help with substance abuse problems and addictive diseases, contact the Clayton Center Community Service Board at (770) 478-2280.
National Handwashing Awareness Week

Disease can start in a lot of places, but that place is often as close as our palms. December 1-7, 2013 is National Handwashing Awareness Week. During this time, public health agencies urge children and adults to help control disease by being more conscious about washing their hands. In addition, people are encouraged to avoid germ-transferring behaviors like sneezing into the hand and rubbing the membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth.

Henry the Hand, the national mascot for handwashing awareness, urges people to become Champion Handwashers and “avoid getting sick by doing the four-part trick.” The “four-part trick consists of: 1) Wash your hands often; 2) Don’t cough into your hand; 3) Use your arm to cover your mouth when you can’t overcome the urge to sneeze; and 4) Avoid the T-zone (don’t put your fingers in your eyes, nose, or mouth).

Doing these simple things over the holiday season will improve your chances of avoiding viral and bacterial infections, so be a champion: Don’t forget to wash your hands. For more information about National Handwashing Awareness Week, visit www.henrythehand.com.

Holiday Food Safety Tips (from WebMD)

Everybody likes to eat, but nobody likes to get sick. Here are some holiday food safety tips that can protect you and your loved ones from food-borne illness.

- **Have a master plan.** Don’t rely on the outdoors to keep foods at their proper temperatures.
- **Use a thermometer.** Turkeys, stuffing, side dishes, and all leftovers should be cooked to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit and kept above 140 degrees during serving to be sure that any potential bacteria is destroyed.
- **Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of preparation -** Leaving food out too long is a big no-no.
- **Properly defrost your turkey, or buy a fresh one.** If you choose a frozen turkey, allocate 24 hours per five pounds to defrost in the refrigerator, and whatever you do, don’t defrost the bird on the kitchen counter.
- **Wash your hands thoroughly and often -- before, during, and after food preparation.** Simply washing your hands is one of the easiest ways to minimize bacterial contamination and keep your food safe.
- **Wash all fresh produce.** Wash even prepackaged greens, to minimize potential bacterial contamination.
- **Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees.** Even after using a microwave, you should use a thermometer to check that your food is at 165 degrees.
- **Keep guests (and sticky fingers) out of the kitchen.** The holidays occur during cold and flu season. Use appetizers to keep “food pickers” at bay and out of the kitchen to avoid the spread of cold and flu germs.
- **Serve only pasteurized apple cider.** Most juices, including apple cider, are pasteurized to destroy any harmful bacteria. While you can buy unpasteurized juice, it will contain a warning that it can cause serious illness in vulnerable people.
- **Be ‘egg-stra’ careful with eggs.** Many eggnog recipes call for uncooked eggs, but to be perfectly safe, you need to use pasteurized eggs or cook the egg yolks lightly with the sugar to be sure you kill any potential salmonella bacteria.

**Yersiniosis and Chitterlings:** Chitterlings, which are made from the large intestines of swine and other animals, must be handled and prepared with caution. Chitterlings can be contaminated with the bacteria *Yersinia enterocolitica*, which can cause a diarrheal illness called “yersiniosis.” To safely prepare chitterlings: 1) Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from chitterlings in your shopping cart and refrigerator; 2) Pre-boil chitterlings for 5 minutes before cleaning and cooking; 3) Thoroughly wash your hands before and after preparation; 4) Wash cutting boards, dishes, countertops, and utensils with hot soapy water and/or a bleach solution after they come into contact with raw meat; 5) Use paper towels instead of cloth to clean surfaces; and 6) Cook chitterlings thoroughly and promptly refrigerate leftovers. For more information about chitterlings safety, visit http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Yersiniosis_and_Chitterlings.pdf.

CCBOH in Pictures

**Left Photo:** From left, CCBOH Public Health Educator Kembali Slaughter, Clayton County Kinship Care Program Coordinator Angie Burda, and CCBOH Public Health Educator Braddie Division pose next to kale ready to be harvested at the Kinship Care Resource Center Community Garden in Jonesboro. Established with a Georgia Nutrition Council grant secured by CCBOH and the Clayton County Cooperative Extension Service, the garden is maintained by grandparents and grandchildren who utilize the center.

**Right Photo:** Clayton County District Health Director Melinda Ermolaie Bryan MD (center left with plaque) accepts a proclamation from the Clayton County Board of Commissioners (BOC) designating November as Safe Sleep Awareness Month in Clayton County. The proclamation, which was read during the Nov. 19, 2013 BOC meeting, highlighted the importance of safe sleep practices, such as placing infants on their back to sleep and avoiding adult-infant co-sleeping. CCBOH Making Our Mothers Successful (MOMS) Program Coordinator Trenessa Nelson (third from left) and CCBOH Perinatal Outreach Coordinator Taylor Bryan (fourth from left) are also pictured.