

## Jackson County Department of Public Health

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### GET TESTED DURING HIV TESTING AWARENESS DAY

June 27 is National HIV Testing Awareness Day, a day to raise awareness about the importance of testing and early diagnosis of HIV. This year's theme, "Doing it my way," highlights how and why people make testing part of their lives on their terms and in their way. "Doing it my way" encourages individuals to find what motivates them to get tested and stay healthy as well as how to get tested—at home, at a clinic, or in the company of a loved one. The Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) encourages everyone to find out how to "do it their own way" and get tested, know their status, and get linked to care.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 1.1 million people in the United States have HIV which includes about 162,000 who are unaware of their status. Nearly 40% of new infections are transmitted by people who did not know that they had the virus. With these statistics in mind, it is vitally important to get tested regularly for the prevention of HIV infection. Other steps you can take to reduce your risk of getting HIV include:

- Choose less risky sexual behaviors. HIV is mainly spread through anal or vaginal sex without a condom or without taking medicines to prevent or treat HIV.
- Use condoms correctly every time you have sex.
- Know your partner's HIV status prior to have sex with him/her.
- Limit your number of sexual partners. The more partners you have, the more likely you are to have a partner with poorly controlled HIV.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP is a prevention option for people who don't have HIV but who are at high risk of becoming infected with HIV.
- Don't inject drugs. But if you do, only use sterile drug injection equipment and never share your equipment with others.

JCDPH offers confidential counseling and testing for sexually transmitted diseases including HIV. Parental permission is not required for minors and testing for HIV is free of charge. No appointments are necessary for HIV testing. For questions, call 828-587-8289.

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