

live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at VistaNational Insurance Group, Inc..

World AIDS Day

Facts about HIV, AIDS and how you can help

According to *Out Magazine*, one person in the United States becomes infected with HIV/AIDS every 15 minutes. There are currently over one million people living in the U.S. with HIV and more than a quarter of them do not even know that they are infected, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

While once a disease thought to only affect homosexual men, this disease is now among the top 10 leading causes of death for women ages 15 to 54 years old. For these women, heterosexual intercourse is the leading cause of contraction.

What is HIV/AIDS?

HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. Without treatment, the immune system becomes increasingly weak and cannot fight off disease and infection. A person is described as HIV positive if they have contracted the HIV virus. If this same person's immune system becomes so weak that it can no longer fight off disease, they have then developed AIDS.

Currently, there is no cure for HIV/AIDS. However, there are treatments available that allow infected individuals to live healthy

and happy lives. If HIV is diagnosed in its early stages, treatment can help prevent or postpone the onset of AIDS.

Worldwide Support

Since those infected often receive rejection, ridicule and harsh treatment at school, work and from the healthcare industry, they need support from their friends, family, employers, healthcare providers and the community at large.

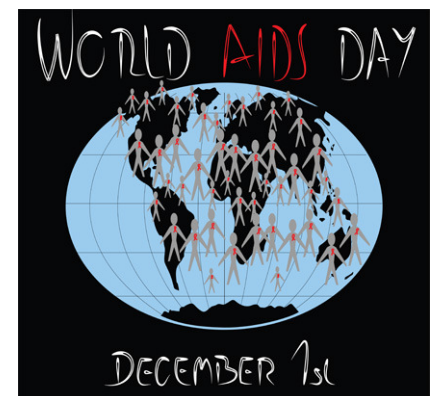
In support of those affected by the illness and with the hopes of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, a group of health ministers created World AIDS Day in December of 1988. The goal of their efforts was and still is to highlight the challenges and consequences of HIV/AIDS, prevent further spreading of the disease and to improve the livelihood of those already infected.

Each year, people from around the globe celebrate the effort to raise awareness and change lives for the better. In conjunction with World AIDS Day each year, Light

to Unite is held to make a difference for those in the U.S. who are infected or affected by the disease.

To show your support for the cause, light a candle on December 1. Then, share a story about HIV/AIDS with a friend, coworker or stranger, and encourage others to get educated about this disease.

To learn more about this effort, visit www.LightToUnite.org and wear a red ribbon on December 1 to show your support.



Did You Know...?

Of the reported cases of HIV in the U.S., 49 percent contracted the disease from homosexual male sexual contact, 32 percent from heterosexual sexual contact, 14.2 percent from intravenous drug use, 3.6 percent from homosexual male sexual contact along with intravenous drug use, and 1.2 percent from other causes.