

November 24, 2014

World Aids Day

This World Aids Day (1 December), health experts are reminding people of the importance of safe behaviours and regular testing to help eliminate the transmission of HIV.

SWSLHD HIV Immunologist Dr John Quin said in 2012, there was a rise in HIV notifications, with 409 new diagnoses in NSW residents, compared with 330 in 2011ⁱ.

“There have been some good advances in testing and treatment of HIV and we’ve done a lot of work over the years encouraging people to get tested and promoting safe behaviours,” Dr Quin said.

“Everyone who is sexually active could be at risk of acquiring HIV. It affects people of all ages, genders, cultures and sexual orientation.

“We encourage people to get tested more often. Testing is faster and easier than ever before and it’s confidential.

“The earlier you know your HIV status and the sooner you see a doctor, the better your outlook.

“Your GP or a sexual health clinic can talk to you about how often you should be tested for HIV, depending on your situation.

“Treatment is simple with less side effects. Antiviral treatment not only improves health and life expectancy but also dramatically reduces the risk of passing on HIV,” he said.

HIV tests are covered by Medicare and can be done by any GP. The public sexual health clinics at Liverpool and Campbelltown are free and confidential, do not require a Medicare Card and in most cases results are available the next day.

In 2012, 14 per cent of HIV notifications were from heterosexual contact. There are currently around 15,000 people living with HIV in NSW.

Dr Quin said the most effective way to reduce your risk of contracting HIV was to always use condoms, sterile injecting equipment and have regular HIV and STI testing.

“While an HIV diagnosis is no longer a death sentence, it has lifelong consequences that vary from person to person,” he said.

On World Aids Day (Monday, 1 December), Liverpool Hospital will be holding an information stall and barbecue at Entrance B from 11:30am – 1:30pm. People are being asked to show their support for those living with HIV by wearing a red ribbon.

For more information visit www.sticlinic.com.au or www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv
To book a free and confidential HIV test at Liverpool Sexual Health clinic call 9827 8022.

ⁱNSW Ministry of Health Snapshot of HIV Strategy, June 2013.