

## Media Release

---

1 December 2017

### HIV testing key to ending transmission

New data shows that almost half of all people diagnosed with HIV are in the late stage of infection, prompting NSW Health to urge anyone at risk to be regularly tested.

In the lead up to World AIDS Day this week (December 1), South Western Sydney Local Health District's HIV and Relate Programs Manager Megan Brooks is reminding people there are a variety of high-quality, safe HIV testing options now available, including dried blood spot (DBS) self-testing.

"People who may be at risk of HIV are encouraged to get tested. Once a person is diagnosed, they can start treatment to improve their health and prevent the virus from being passed on to others," Ms Brooks said.

"These days, health professionals treat HIV like any other chronic manageable condition."

The latest NSW HIV Strategy Data Report shows that 44 per cent of people diagnosed with HIV in the first nine months of this year were diagnosed at a late stage of infection.

The report highlights that while most new HIV infections reported in January to September this year were in homosexually active men (73 per cent), heterosexual exposure accounted for 22 per cent of all newly reported infections.

The new data also shows that more than one-third (37 per cent) of HIV diagnoses were made by GPs.

"People should talk to their GP about having a HIV test or contact the NSW Sexual Health Infolink to find the best testing option for them," Ms Brooks said.

"Prevention is still essential and condoms are considered the best way to prevent HIV and STIs."

In addition to encouraging gay and homosexually active men to regularly test for HIV, NSW Health also recommends testing for:

- Those diagnosed with a sexually transmissible infection (STI), or hepatitis B or C;
- People who are from or have a partner from a high-prevalence country;
- People who have had sex without a condom while traveling in a high-prevalence country;
- Heterosexual men and women with multiple partners, or a recent partner change; and
- People who have sexual contact with someone who is at risk of HIV infection.

For information on HIV testing and living with HIV visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au/hiv-test](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/hiv-test)

For more information on Dried Blood Spot HIV test, visit [www.HIVtest.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.HIVtest.health.nsw.gov.au).

**For confidential information** on where to get a HIV test people can **call the [NSW Sexual Health Infolink](#)** on **1800 451 624**.