



Every year Active Duty Sailors and Marines acquire preventable sexually transmitted disease such as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). According to the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) 95 active duty Sailors and Marines became infected with HIV in 2007. From 1985 through 2007, at least 5,375 active duty Sailors and Marines have been infected with HIV, most of whom have been lost to the service. According to a new surveillance system from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention approximately 56,300 new HIV infections occurred in the U.S. in 2006. This number is approximately 40 percent higher than CDC's previous estimate of 40,000 new infections per year, which was based on less precise methods. This new estimate does not mean that there has been an increase in HIV infections but rather that a better method to identify new infections was developed. Also, these findings emphasize the need to expand access to effective HIV education and prevention programs.

In particular the state of California has the second largest number of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) cases in the United States; San Diego County has the third highest number of AIDS cases in the state of California. This fact sheet offers information and resources about HIV/AIDS and what you can do to prevent it.

What is HIV?

HIV is a virus that kills your body's T helper cells, a type of white blood cells which help your body fight off infection and disease. HIV can be passed from person to person if someone with HIV infection has sex with or shares drug injection needles with another person. Women can transmit HIV to their babies during pregnancy, birth, or breast milk.

What is AIDS?

AIDS is caused by HIV. By killing or damaging cells of the body's immune system, HIV progressively destroys the body's ability to fight infections and certain cancers. People diagnosed with AIDS may get life-threatening diseases called opportunistic infections. These infections are caused by microbes such as viruses or bacteria that usually do not make healthy people sick.

How can I get HIV?

- By having unprotected sex without a condom with someone who has HIV or someone whose HIV status is unknown.
- By sharing drug injection needles or drug equipment used to prepare drugs for injection with someone who has HIV.

How can't I get HIV?

- By working with or being around someone who has HIV.
- From sweat, spit, tears, clothes, drinking fountains, phones, toilet seats, or through everyday things like sharing a meal.
- From insect bites or stings.
- From donating blood.
- From a closed-mouth kiss (there is a very small chance of getting it from open-mouthed or "French" kissing with an infected person because of possible blood contact).

How can I protect myself from getting HIV?

- There is no vaccine for HIV at this point in time. However, practicing the ABC's (Abstinence, Be faithful, use Condoms) of HIV prevention, as well as not sharing needles can significantly reduce the risk of acquiring HIV.

How can leadership help?

- Establish a policy of responsible sexual behavior as the norm.
- Protect and respect the medical privacy of members.
- Conduct quality all-hands sexual responsibility training.
- Ensure the crew has access to condoms at all times—even while deployed and underway.

Resources:

Navy HIV policies:

[Military HIV/AIDS Policy](#)

Information for leadership:

[Leadership Toolbox](#)

For more general information on HIV/AIDS:

www.AIDS.gov or www.cdc.gov/hiv.