



African, Caribbean & Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Black, African and Caribbean Network (CHABAC) and its partners are pleased to announce the fifth annual **African, Caribbean and Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day** on **February 7, 2019**.

The African, Caribbean and Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day will help raise awareness of HIV, promote HIV prevention and contribute to addressing HIV-related stigma in Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities. This commemorative Day is inspired by the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day that has been observed in the U.S. on February 7 every year since 1999.

The theme of the 2019 **African, Caribbean and Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day** is: **Start a conversation. Know your health options. End the stigma.**

Start a conversation

It is important that members of Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities talk about HIV with family, friends and sexual partners. Start a conversation about how to prevent the transmission of HIV or what it is like to live with HIV, or ask questions to learn about HIV. Being informed and talking openly about HIV can help to increase awareness and understanding of HIV and AIDS, and reduce HIV-related stigma as well as HIV transmission.

Know your health options

Knowledge is key to making informed decisions about your health. Knowing your options can help significantly reduce the risk of HIV transmission. Did you know that an HIV-positive person on treatment who maintains an "undetectable viral load" (meaning that the amount of HIV in their blood is so low that routine tests can't find it) has a [negligible risk](#) of passing HIV on to sexual partners? Also, the use of male and female condoms and the use of [safer practices](#) when using drugs can go a long way to helping to prevent HIV transmission.

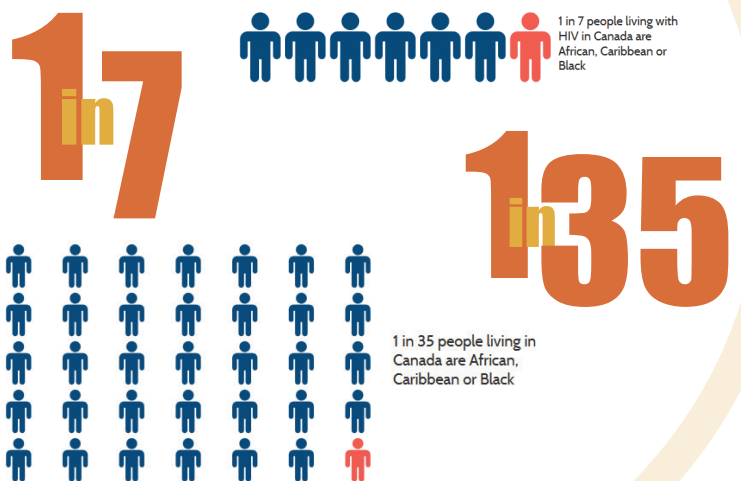
For people at high risk for HIV, research has shown that [pre-exposure prophylaxis](#) (PrEP) – where an HIV-negative person takes anti-HIV medication as prescribed – is also a new and highly effective way of preventing HIV transmission. In addition, PEP ([post-exposure prophylaxis](#), where anti-HIV medication is taken after an actual or suspected exposure to HIV to prevent transmission) reduces the risk of transmission by more than 80 per cent. Talk to your local AIDS service or-

ganization or health care provider for more information. And for information about HIV tests and where to get one, visit www.HIV411.ca.

End the stigma

Stigma and discrimination based on gender, race and sexual orientation are significant barriers to HIV prevention in ACB communities and can negatively impact HIV testing rates and the ability of people living with HIV to seek the treatment, care and support they need. ACB communities active in talking about stigma and health issues, including the criminalization of HIV non-disclosure, help to inform people about their options, encourage more integrated service across the continuum of testing, treatment and care, and reduce stigma.

Start a conversation. Know your health options. End the stigma



¹ For the purposes of this fact sheet we use "African, Caribbean and Black people" to refer to people from countries where HIV is endemic. The term "people from countries where HIV is endemic" is an epidemiologic term often used in HIV/AIDS surveillance and research activities and refers to a population that is largely composed of Black people of African and Caribbean descent. As national HIV statistics are not available for African, Caribbean and Black populations, the above statistic does not account for African, Caribbean and Black people who are not from countries where HIV is endemic, are men who have sex with men or who use injection drugs and therefore is likely to under represent HIV prevalence among ACB people

Background

- People from African, Caribbean and Black communities are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS in Canada. In 2014, they represented an estimated 16%, or one in seven people living with HIV in Canada while representing only 2.5% of the population.
- In 2014 the estimated new infection rate among people from African, Caribbean and Black communities is about 6 times higher than among other Canadians.
- In 2011, an estimated 22.9% of new HIV infections in Ontario were through heterosexual transmission among people from African, Caribbean and Black communities. In Alberta, this percentage was 21.2%; was Manitoba 19.1%; in Quebec 16.2%; in Atlantic Canada 5.7%; and British Columbia 3.4%; and in Saskatchewan 0.9%. (PHAC 2014)

There are many factors that increase vulnerability to HIV among African, Caribbean and Black people at risk of or living with HIV infection. Among these factors are the experiences and impact of racism combined with other forms of discrimination, such as those based on

gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. These factors affect access to information, resources and services, as well as opportunities for making health-related decisions. (Falconer, 2005; PHAC 2009)

Given this broader context, it is important to raise awareness about HIV, promote HIV prevention and regular HIV testing, as well as to open conversation about HIV among Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities.

Canadian HIV/AIDS Black, African and Caribbean Network (CHABAC)

CHABAC is a national network of organizations, individuals and other stakeholders who are dedicated to responding to issues related to HIV and AIDS in Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities. Our vision is to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic among the African, Caribbean and Black population in Canada. For more information about CHABAC or to become a member or join the listserv, go to <http://www.icad-cisd.com/CHABAC>. Also, follow us on Twitter @CHABACinfo.

Sources:

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