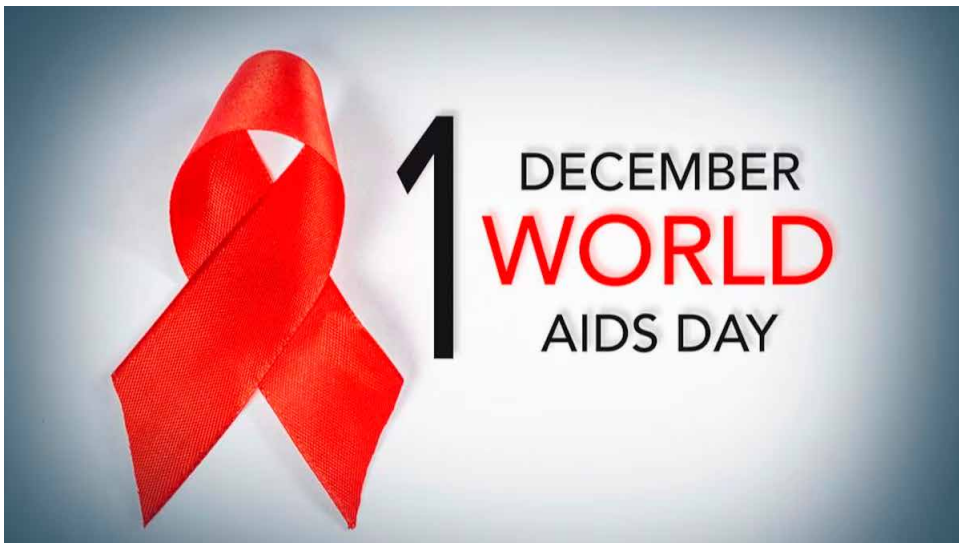


World AIDS Day: Celebrating Progress and Confronting Disparities



EACH year, on the 1st of December, we observe World AIDS Day, a day dedicated to reaffirming the global commitment to raising awareness, reducing stigma, and striving for an HIV/AIDS-free world.

AUSTRALIA'S STRIDES AHEAD IN HIV/AIDS ELIMINATION

Australia has emerged as a frontrunner in the global fight against HIV/AIDS, with a consistent decline in the

number of new infections over the years. In 2021, Australia reported a mere 552 new HIV diagnoses, representing a remarkable 48% decline since 2012, according to data from the Kirby Institute (www.kirby.unsw.edu.au). This impressive reduction can be attributed to a multifaceted approach, including heightened awareness of HIV within at-risk populations, increased rates of HIV diagnosis and treatment,

and a growing uptake of Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for prevention.

CHALLENGES REMAIN: ADDRESSING DISPARITIES

Despite Australia's commendable progress, certain challenges persist. A concerning trend is the lack of similar reductions in HIV infections among people born overseas living in Australia. In addition, a significant portion of individuals in Queensland were diagnosed

late with HIV in 2022, having lived with the virus at least or more than four years without knowledge of their condition.

Currently, there more than 6,000 people living with HIV in Queensland. To address this disparity and encourage more individuals from overseas backgrounds to seek testing and treatment, the Queensland government has taken a significant step. Starting in October 2023, Queensland Health initiated a program offering free HIV treatment and related care in public health facilities, such as public hospitals and sexual health clinics, to individuals without a Medicare Card. This initiative aims to remove the financial barriers that previously prevented many people with HIV from accessing necessary treatment and care.

ELIMINATING HIV/AIDS: A COLLECTIVE EFFORT

To achieve the goal of eliminating HIV/AIDS in Australia, a collective effort is needed from all of us, for example:

1. Know your HIV Status: HIV testing is

imperative for preventing further infections and achieving better health outcomes. Unfortunately, 10% of people living with HIV in Australia remain unaware of their infection. In Australia, HIV testing is confidential and easily accessible through GPs and sexual health clinics. Self-testing kits are also available for purchase at atomohivtest.com.

2. Initiate Treatment if HIV Positive: Current HIV treatments are highly effective in reducing the viral load in the blood and decreasing the risk of transmission. In Australia, these treatments are accessible at no cost for the majority of the populaion,

including people without a Medicare Card, if being treated at public health facilities (not at GPs). People undergoing treatment who maintain an undetectable viral load can no longer transmit the virus through sexual contact, known as "U=U." (Undetectable = Untransmittable).

3. Prevention is Key: Use Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and condoms to prevent against HIV transmission.

In unity, we can collectively strive for an HIV/AIDS free world. World AIDS Day reminds us that the battle continues, and it is through our joint efforts that we can overcome this global health challenges.



Hepatitis, HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health Program Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ)

Spring preparations for beautiful girls

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HEY GIRLS, spring is just around the corner and this means that we will have to state preparing for it more properly. Cleaning the house is not the only thing that you will have to do. The best thing for your body right now is to start a cleansing and beauty program. One of the first things that you will have to do is to improve the way your hair looks.

With a different color of hair, you will look great. Some highlights will also make you look wonderful even if you don't change the color of your hair radically. You could also opt for semi-permanent colouring (may be Heena colour) as it will help you go through a transition stage before you actually make the transformation.

MOISTURE BALANCE.

One of the hardest things to conquer with hair is proper moisture. Just when you get your hair all moisturized to combat the dry season, it gets wet and humid, and then the sun comes out and wreaks havoc on your locks.

As the weather starts to warm up and the humidity in the air increases, it's time to change your conditioning habits. It does not mean that you need to stop conditioning, just make a few adjustments.



If you deep condition once a week in the winter months, change it to every other week. If you use a heavy daily conditioner in the dry season, try changing to a lighter moisture or balancing conditioner.

The rule of thumb with moisture is to listen to your hair. If you notice static, dry ends, a lot of tangles, or if your hair feels rough to the touch you are lacking moisture and need to add a deep conditioning treatment



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or a moisturizing conditioner to your hair routine. If your hair is limp or oily, start cutting back on the moisture.

When you are not looking to change the color of your hair then you may want to change your make-up. For instance, you can use a little pick blush, some mascara and gloss and your look is done! You can also choose some colourful lipstick and nail polish upgrade your look a little bit. Just remember, sometimes less is more.

It is advisable to eat more vegetables in the spring and also, if you don't have the habit of drinking 2l of water a day then you should start now. You might also want to resort to some specialized hydrating treatments for your hair in order to get rid of the dry hair. Clearly there are a lot of things that we have to take care of during the spring and these are just some of the most important issues.

So here we go, take care and look always beautiful.