



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## HIV/AIDS And Women, 25 Years Later

(NAPSA)—It's been a quarter of a century since the world was first introduced to HIV/AIDS. Yet, according to a new study, many women don't feel empowered to take important precautions to protect themselves from the disease.

A new report by the not-for-profit National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC) finds that women often feel powerless to protect themselves against HIV and AIDS. Some don't insist that their partners wear condoms during intercourse, while others don't take the anti-viral medication known to dramatically increase survival rates, should they be diagnosed.

About a third of all people in the U.S. with AIDS are women, and minority women bear the greatest burdens imposed by this disease. African-American women account for nearly 60 percent of all AIDS cases in women in the U.S., with a diagnosis rate 25 times that of white women and about four times that of Hispanic women.

Also alarming is the particular vulnerability of teenage girls to the disease. Girls in that age group tend to be less likely to require their partners to wear condoms and their reproductive tracts are more susceptible to the disease due to possible tearing during sexual activity.

### Advances in HIV/AIDS

If you're infected with HIV, it's important that you seek treatment from a qualified specialist, usually an infectious disease doctor who specializes in HIV and AIDS as soon as possible. Researchers now understand how the disease affects women, com-



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pared to men, and can adjust treatments accordingly. In addition, the transfer rate from HIV-infected mother to infant is now as low as 2 percent, with some studies putting that number at 0 percent. The key is to know if you have the disease, which is why it's so important for pregnant women to be treated.

Also good news is that today there are more than 25 drugs available to treat HIV. Some come in combination doses, so instead of the 10 to 12 pills you might have had to take years ago, you may only have to take one or two a day. With treatment, studies find, you can not only significantly reduce the amount of virus in your system and prevent secondary infections, but you can also reduce the risk of transmission to others.

For a complimentary copy of the National Women's Health Report, Women & HIV, visit [www.healthywomen.org](http://www.healthywomen.org) or call (877) 986-9472.