



Canada's source for  
HIV and hepatitis C  
information

La source canadienne  
de renseignements sur  
le VIH et l'hépatite C

From *HIV in Canada: A primer for service providers*

## Youth

### Key Points

- Youth (aged 15–29 years) accounted for 25% of new HIV diagnoses in 2016.
- Youth (aged 15–29 years) accounted for 27% of all Canadians diagnosed with HIV up to 2016.
- Street-involved youth, youth who inject drugs, and young men who have sex with men are at higher risk for HIV.
- High rates of sexually transmitted infections among youth could be an indicator of HIV transmission risk.

Youth (aged 15 to 29 years) accounted for 25% of all new HIV diagnoses (574 reported cases) in 2016. Individuals between the ages of 15 and 29 years accounted for 27% (21,275 reported cases) of all diagnosed HIV infections up to 2016. However, it should be noted that symptoms for HIV may take many years to develop, sometimes as many as 10 years or more, so many people infected when they are youth will probably not be diagnosed until they are adults, once symptoms appear. For this reason, many people infected as youth may not be captured within these statistics.

HIV is prevalent among certain populations of youth. According to national HIV estimates, the HIV prevalence rate in Canada is 0.2%. According to various national surveillance systems, the prevalence rate among street youth, youth who inject drugs, and young men who have sex with men is much higher. According to a national surveillance system of street youth (aged 15 to 24) in Canada conducted between 2009 and 2012 (E-SYS), the HIV prevalence rate among street-involved youth was 1%. According to a national surveillance system of people who inject drugs in Canada conducted between 2010 and 2012 (I-Track), the HIV prevalence rate among youth (aged 15 to 24) who use injection drugs was 3%. According to a national surveillance system of men who have sex with men in Canada conducted between 2005 and 2007 (M-Track), the HIV prevalence rate among young men who have sex with men (aged 29 or less) was 4%.

While HIV prevalence remains low in the general population of youth, increasing rates of sexually transmitted infections show an alarming trend. In 2015, 77% of new cases of chlamydia were among youth (aged 15 to 29); 59% of new cases of gonorrhea were among youth; and 24% of new cases of infectious syphilis were among youth. This is a marker of risky sexual behaviour in the population, suggesting that youth may be at risk for HIV.

### Resources

[The epidemiology of HIV in youth](#) – CATIE fact sheet

[HIV/AIDS in Canada](#) – CATIE infographic

[People living with HIV in Canada](#) – CATIE infographic

[New HIV infections in Canada](#) – CATIE infographic

[Where is HIV hitting hardest?](#) – CATIE infographic

[HIV in Canada](#) – PHAC infographic

### Sources

1. Bourgeois AC, Edmunds M, Awan A, et al. HIV in Canada—Surveillance Report, 2016. *Canada Communicable Disease Report*. 2017;43(12):248–255. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/reports-publications/canada-communicable-disease-report-ccdr/monthly-issue/2017-43/ccdr-volume-43-12-december-7-2017/hiv-canada-2016.html>

2. Ogunnaike-Cooke S, Bennett R, Cule S, et al. *Behavioural and biological surveillance of key populations in Canada: Monitoring trends in the prevalence of HIV, other sexually transmitted/blood-borne infections (STBBI), and associated risk factors*. Poster presentation at the XIX International AIDS Conference , Washington DC, July 2012.
3. *Unpublished data from I-Track: Enhanced Surveillance of Risk Behaviours among People who Inject Drugs, Phase 3 (2010-2012)*. Public Health Agency of Canada, Surveillance and Epidemiology Division, Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control. Used for the Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting, 2013.
4. Public Health Agency of Canada. Notifiable diseases online. Available from: <http://diseases.canada.ca/notifiable/> [accessed June 26, 2017].

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