

World AIDS Day: 01st December - Commemorating, Uniting, and Accelerating the Response

World AIDS Day is observed every year on **01st December** to unite people around the world in the fight against HIV, show support for people living with HIV, and remember those who have died from AIDS-related illnesses.

Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first-ever international day for global health, and it remains as relevant today as it ever was. It is a critical moment to remind governments and the public that HIV has not gone away and that sustained commitment is needed to achieve the goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Key Objectives of World AIDS Day

- **Raising Awareness:** Educating the global community about the status of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- **Solidarity and Support:** Uniting to show compassion and support for people living with HIV.
- **Ending Stigma and Discrimination:** Highlighting the need to combat misinformation and prejudice against people affected by the virus.
- **Commemoration:** Honoring the lives lost to AIDS-related illnesses.
- **Mobilizing Action:** Encouraging governments, organizations, and individuals to increase funding, improve access to prevention and treatment services, and commit to human rights-centered approaches.

The Universal Symbol: The Red Ribbon

The **Red Ribbon** is the universal symbol of awareness of, support for, and solidarity with people living with HIV. Wearing it on World AIDS Day is a simple yet powerful way to demonstrate commitment to the cause.

World AIDS Day 2025: Theme and Focus

Each year, the day focuses on a specific theme chosen in consultation with UNAIDS, WHO, and various grassroots and international agencies.

- **Theme for World AIDS Day 2025: “Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response.”**

This theme emphasizes the need for a renewed, transformative approach in the face of recent global disruptions (like pandemics and conflicts) and the ongoing challenges of funding crises and widening inequalities. The focus is on:

1. **Bridging the Financing Gap:** Addressing the historic funding crisis that is threatening to undo decades of progress.
2. **Transforming Services:** Making HIV services more resilient, equitable, and community-led, especially for key populations.

3. **Removing Barriers:** Combating stigma, discrimination, and punitive laws that block access to prevention, treatment, and care.
4. **Community Leadership:** Empowering communities, who are often on the front lines, to lead the way forward.

Global Progress and The Path Ahead

Significant progress has been made since the height of the epidemic, primarily due to advances in Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), which allows people with HIV to live long, healthy lives and prevents transmission. Globally, the focus is now on achieving the United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goal 3.3**, which aims to **end the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030**.

To achieve this goal, concerted efforts are needed to:

- Ensure 95% of all people living with HIV know their status.
- Ensure 95% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection receive sustained antiretroviral therapy.
- Ensure 95% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy have viral suppression.

World AIDS Day is a vital call to action to not only sustain past gains but to accelerate progress and ensure that no one is left behind.