Older People Are Still Doing It, but Are They Talking About STIs and HIV?

As STI rates rise among people over 55, a new campaign featuring older adults encourages conversations about pleasure and HIV prevention.

April 1, 2026 By Trent Straube

News flash: Older people are still having sex! In fact, the rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as gonorrhea, syphilis and chlamydia, have doubled among adults 55 and older in the past 10 years, and some STI rates have more than tripled among those older than 65, according to the American Medical Association.

This means that the aging population could benefit from more meaningful discourse and education about sexual health, especially the prevention of HIV and STIs. To encourage these discussions and provide related resources, the HIV/AIDS Network Coordination, which is based in Seattle's Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, launched a new campaign titled "Sex Never Gets Old."

Sample images from the campaign are posted throughout. HANC encourages you to download them and share on social media and use tags #SexNeverGetsOld and #SNGO.

"As a society, we don't feel that older adults are vulnerable when it comes to HIV. Few HIV prevention campaigns are geared toward older adults," noted Meredith Greene, MD, of the Indiana University Center for Aging Research at the Regenstrief Institute, in the campaign's online materials.



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Featuring images of older adults and text in both English and Spanish, the campaign breaks down the sexual health spectrum into five pillars. For each of the pillars, the Sex Never Gets Old website includes illustrative mini stories, facts, sharable graphics, hashtags and other resources. The pillars are:

- Sexual Wellness An important state of physical, emotional and social well-being related to sexuality focused on the possibility of engaging in pleasurable experiences throughout the human lifespan.

- Pleasure The gratification of the senses or of the mind; agreeable sensations or emotions; the excitement, relish or happiness produced by enjoyment or the expectation of good.

- Prevention Actions or behaviors focused on safeguarding health.

- Testing The use of medical procedures to detect, diagnose or monitor a condition. It can also be used to determine a course of treatment or assess the effectiveness of a treatment plan.

- Intimacy Emotional and physical closeness involving various ways of expressing affection that

fosters a deep emotional connection—this can be emotional and/or physical.

One example of HANC's "Sex Never Gets Old" campaignCourtesy of HIV/AIDS Network Coordination (HANC)

Sexual pleasure doesn’t have an age limit. Many older adults are still sexually active: 73% (57–64), 53% (65–74), & 26% (75–85). That’s why regular STI & HIV testing matters for older adults too. Pleasure, health, & informed choices should last a lifetime. #HealthyAging #HIVTesting #SexNeverGetsOld

[image or embed]

— Legacy Project (@hanc-legacyproject.bsky.social)

March 11, 2026 at 2:09 PM

The pillar of Sexual Wellness includes the story of Ted and Simone, ages 73 and 69. It reads: “We love life and enjoy spending time together exploring the world. We also enjoy sexually exploring, and that’s why we agreed that regular testing for STIs and HIV as well as understanding our HIV prevention options gives us the freedom to be in control of our sexual wellness. As we continue living life to the fullest, we are living proof that sex never gets old!”

The Pleasure pillar includes the story of Lisa, 56, who recounts: “I never imagined that I would find myself in my 50s being more sexually active than when in my 20s. I love my body and celebrate pleasure in its different shapes and forms in my 56-year-old temple. I test for STIs and HIV on a regular basis because my sexual health is important to me. Take it from me, sex never gets old!”

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And in the Intimacy pillar, the story of Dexter and Fred, 59 and 70, reads: "Friends with benefits may mean something different depending on who you ask. For us, friends with benefits means that we engage with each other on an intimate level. Part of our intimacy includes having open

and honest conversations about sexual health. Discussing STI and HIV testing is a part of those conversations which enhances our intimacy. Our relationship is special as is our intimacy. Sex never gets old!”

One example of HANC’s “Sex Never Gets Old” campaignCourtesy of HIV/AIDS Network Coordination (HANC)

To read more articles about this population group, click #Aging. You'll find headlines such as:

- "How the Reunion Project Builds 'Hope in Community' for Long-Term HIV Survivors,"
- "New Yale Center to Explore and Promote Healthy Aging With HIV,"
- "Vaccines Are Helping Older People More Than We Knew" and
- "HIV and Aging: The Basics."

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