

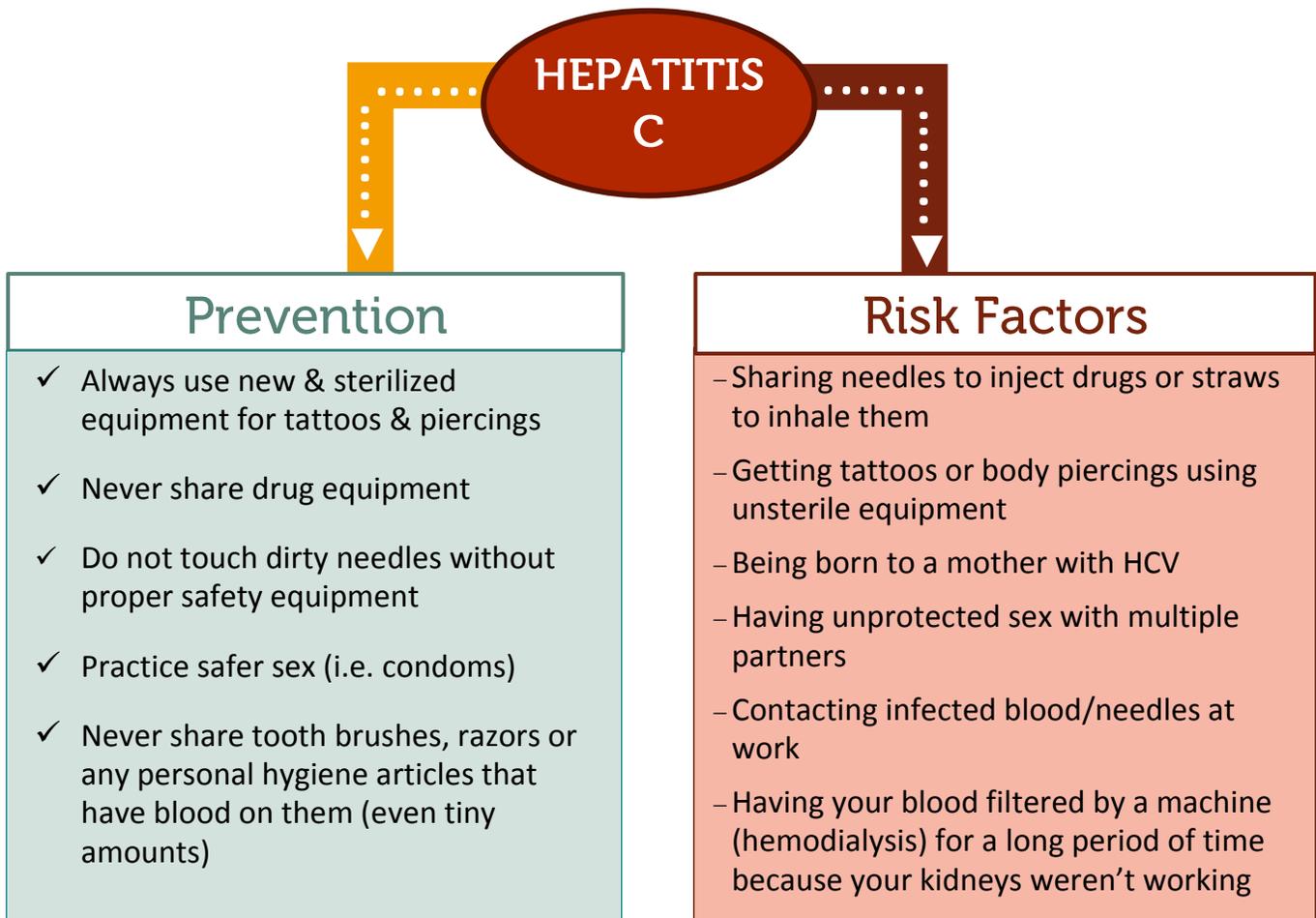
# Hepatitis C & HIV-Related Risk Behaviors

among American Indian Youth in New Mexico 2015



This fact sheet presents data from the 2015 New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) on health risk behaviors among American Indian (AI) high school and middle school students in New Mexico. Comparisons are also made between New Mexico American Indian students, and the all-race student population in New Mexico. The overarching aim of the NM YRRS is to better characterize risk behaviors and resiliency/protective factors among youth in New Mexico.

## Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C Virus



### IMPORTANT

There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). The best way to prevent it is by avoiding behaviors that can spread HCV, especially injecting drugs. Most of these behaviors also increase risk for HIV.<sup>1</sup>

# Hepatitis C & HIV-Related Risk Behaviors

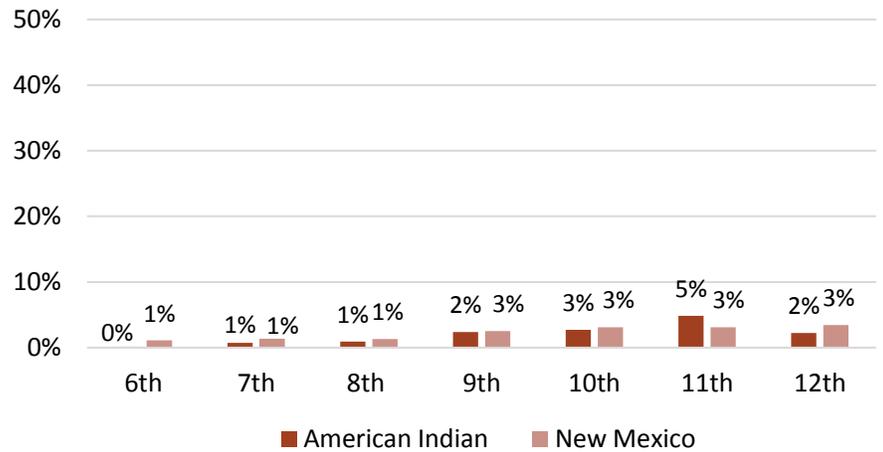
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## INJECTION DRUG USE

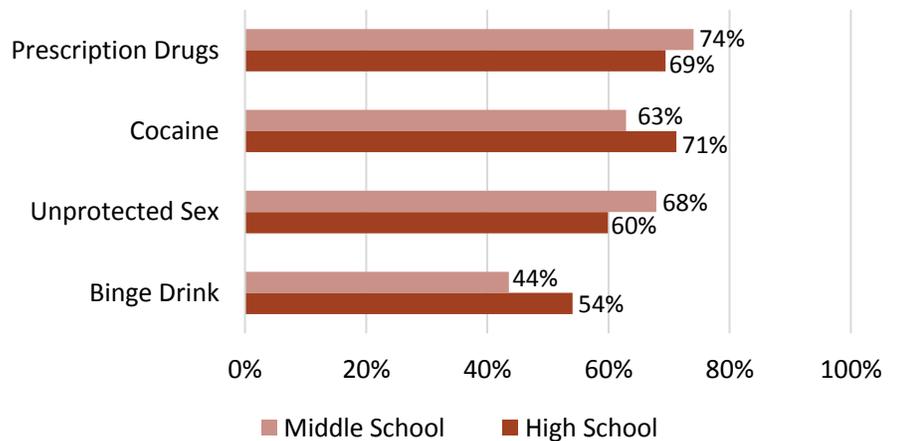
### EVER Used Injection Drugs among Students Grades 6-12

Most American Indian middle and high school students in New Mexico have never used injection drugs. Depending on grade level, 95% - 100% of American Indian adolescents have not used injection drugs. There is no statistically significant difference in use between American Indian (AI) students and the all-race New Mexico population.



### Common Risk Behaviors among American Indian Adolescent Injection Drug Users

Among the small percentage of American Indian (AI) middle school and high school students who have ever injected illegal drugs, many other risky behaviors are common, such as having unprotected sex, binge drinking, and using cocaine and prescription drugs.



### IMPORTANCE OF THE LIVER:

The liver is one of the largest and most important organs in the body. It performs hundreds of functions, including storing nutrients, removing waste products and processing chemicals in food, alcohol and medications. Chronic infection with Hepatitis C virus causes inflammation, scarring and severe liver damage. <sup>1</sup>

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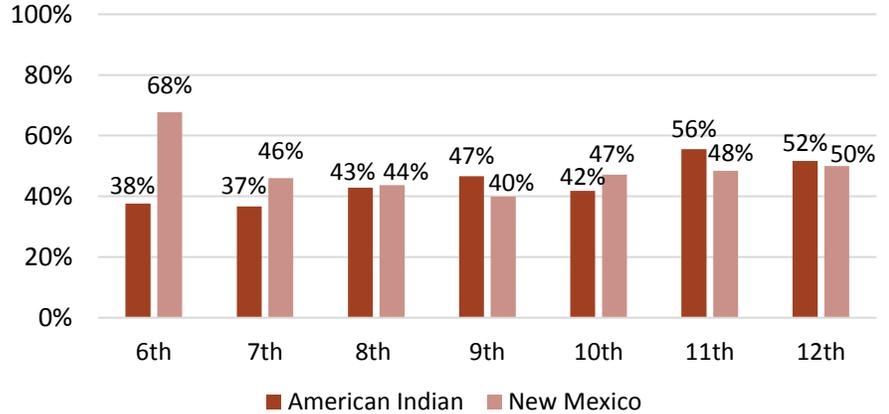
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## SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOR

### Percentage of Sexually Active Students who did NOT use a Condom

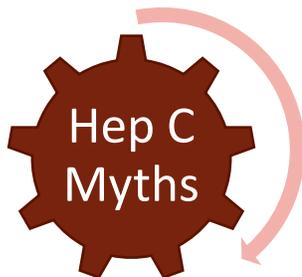
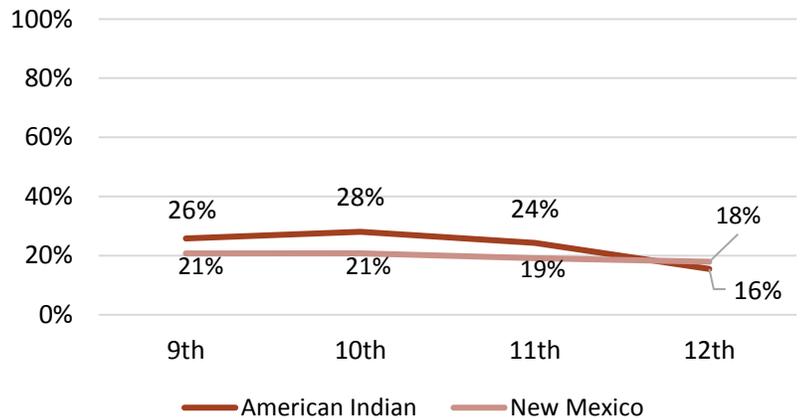
Among sexually active American Indian adolescents, 38% - 56% did not use a condom the last time they had sex depending on grade level. The percentage of adolescents not using a condom increased with increasing grade level.



**HEPATITIS & SEX:** Although less common than sharing needles, Hepatitis C virus can also be spread through unprotected sex with multiple partners, rough sex, and co-infection with HIV or other STIs<sup>1</sup>

### Percentage of Sexually Active Students who Used Alcohol or Drugs Last Time they had Sex

Approximately 1 in 4 sexually active American Indian high school students used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sex. This rate was similar to the all-race New Mexico rate.



### HEPATITIS C is not SPREAD BY:

- Casual contact
- Sneezing/coughing
- Hugging/kissing
- Shaking hands
- Sharing eating utensils and drinking glasses
- Sitting on a toilet seat

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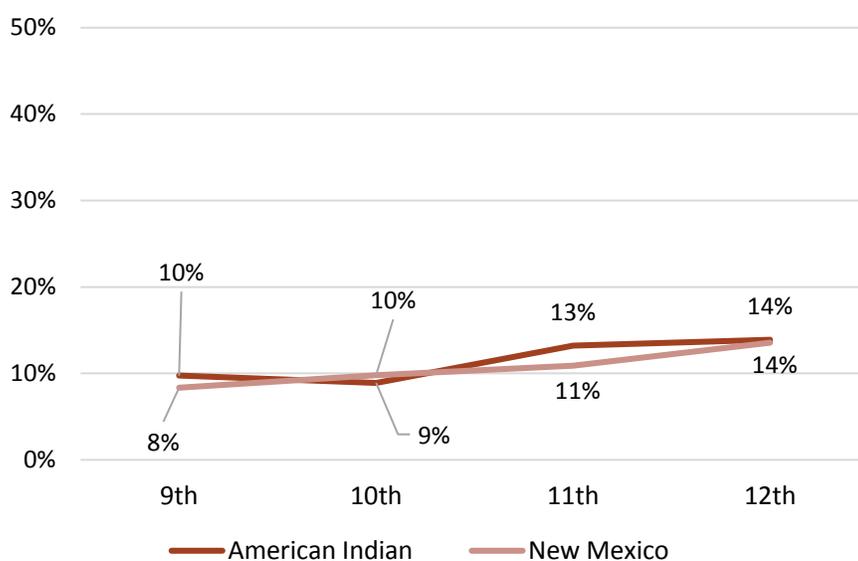


## HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV) Testing

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 should get tested for HIV at least once <sup>1</sup>

### Percentage of High School Students who have Ever Been Tested for HIV by Grade and Race

Most high school students in New Mexico have never been tested for HIV. Although HIV testing increases by grade level, only 10-14% of American Indian high school students have ever been tested for HIV. There were no statistically significant differences by race in New Mexico.



### CDC recommends the following groups to be tested for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV):

All persons with HIV Infection

Ever injected illegal drugs

Children born to HCV+ mothers

Born from 1945 through 1965

Blood Transfusions before 1992

Clotting concentrates made before 1987

### Sources

**NM YRRS** is a joint project of the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC), the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (AASTEC), and the Division of Adolescent and School Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC-DASH). For more information on the NM YRRS visit [www.Youthrisk.org](http://www.Youthrisk.org).

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv>