



[+] LIVING

YOUR GUIDE TO HEALTHY LIVING

HEARING HIV WAS HARD.

TAKING CARE OF IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE.

WITH THE RIGHT STEPS, YOU CAN
LIVE A LONG, HEALTHY LIFE.



IN THIS BOOKLET YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO:

**GET
TREATED
FOR HIV**

**STAY
HEALTHY**

**PROTECT
YOURSELF
& YOUR
PARTNERS**

**FIND
A SUPPORT
NETWORK**



**GET TREATED
FOR HIV**

**EVEN IF YOU FEEL WELL,
GO SEE AN HIV DOCTOR.**

- + **Find a doctor experienced in treating HIV.** Call 311 or text **CARE** to **877877** if you need help.
- + **Talk with your doctor** about which HIV medications are right for you. HIV medications are recommended for **everyone** with HIV.
- + **Start HIV medications right away**, and keep your regularly scheduled doctor's appointments. The sooner you begin treatment, the less HIV will damage your body and your immune system, and the less likely you are to pass HIV to someone else.
- + **Get a viral load test regularly.** This helps your doctor see how well the HIV medication is working.
- + **Even if you are not sure you want to begin** taking HIV medications, go to the doctor regularly.



LEARN ABOUT HIV & AIDS

+ HIV

Human Immunodeficiency Virus – a virus that weakens the immune system and causes AIDS.

+ AIDS

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome – a condition that develops when HIV multiplies and damages your immune system. AIDS makes it easier for you to get some infections and cancers.

+ Antiretroviral therapy

Medicines that stop HIV from multiplying in your body. This may also be called ART.

+ CD4 cells

A type of white blood cell that plays an important role in protecting your body from infection. CD4 cells may also be called T cells.

+ CD4 count

A lab test that measures the number of CD4 cells in your blood. Your CD4 count shows how well your immune system is working. The higher your CD4 count, the better you are able to prevent infections and other complications.

+ Viral load

The amount of HIV in your blood. A lower viral load is better. The goal is to have an “undetectable” viral load.

+ Undetectable viral load

When HIV medications work and you have so little HIV in your blood that tests cannot detect it. This may also be called “viral suppression.”

DID YOU KNOW?

- + HIV medications are now easier to take and have fewer side effects than ever before.
- + You can get HIV medications even if you don't have health insurance or are undocumented.
- + If you're worried about staying on track with your HIV medications, resources are available. Many clinics and community organization offer counseling and support.

HIV medications keep your CD4 cells up and viral load down



CD4



Viral load





STAY HEALTHY

- + **Find a doctor you trust,** and be open about how sex, alcohol, drugs or other behaviors may affect your HIV care or other parts of your life.
- + **Get vaccinated against pneumonia and hepatitis A and B.** Ask your doctor if you need a meningitis or human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine.
- + **If you are having sex, get tested regularly for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).**
- + **Don't start smoking.** If you smoke, take steps to quit. For help, call 311, and ask for the Smokers' Quit line.
- + **Eat a healthy diet, and stay physically active.**
- + **Take your HIV medications every day as prescribed.** Only HIV medications can stop HIV from making you sick.
- + **Get enough sleep and reduce stress.**
- + **Get a flu shot every year.**



PROTECT YOURSELF & YOUR PARTNER

- + **Getting HIV treatment and staying in care** are the most important things you can do for your health and your loved ones.
- + **Take your HIV medications every day, as prescribed.** If you have an undetectable viral load, you are much less likely to pass HIV to your partners.
- + **If you have sex, use condoms.** Condoms greatly reduce the risk of spreading HIV and other STIs.
- + **Use a water-based lube when having sex,** including anal and vaginal sex.
- + **If you inject drugs, never share your syringes or injection equipment.** HIV and hepatitis C can easily spread through small amounts of blood. To find a syringe access program, call 311.

The New York City Health Department can help you notify your sex or needle sharing partners who may have been exposed to HIV so they can get tested. Call 311, and ask for the Contact Notification Assistance Program (CNAP).



TELL YOUR PARTNERS ABOUT NEW WAYS TO PREVENT HIV

- + **PrEP** (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is a medicine that greatly reduces the risk of HIV infection, even if your partner is exposed to HIV.
- + **PEP** (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) is an emergency medication that can stop HIV infection if started within 36 hours of exposure.
- + Talk to your doctor for more information about PrEP and PEP.



FIND A SUPPORT NETWORK

- + **If you are feeling sad, anxious or stressed**, talking to someone may help. Reach out to friends, or ask your doctor for information on support groups or counseling.
- + **If you are feeling depressed or having problems with alcohol or drugs**, talk to your doctor.

The Positive Life Workshop provides information and support for people living with HIV.

The workshop is led by people living with HIV who can help you:

- + Learn more about HIV and your health
- + Connect with doctors and social services
- + Meet others living with HIV

For more information and to register
for the next workshop, call 347-396-7596.



THE NYC CARE COORDINATION PROGRAM CAN HELP WITH:

- + **Medical appointments.** Care coordination staff will work with you to arrange for transportation and child care, remind you about appointments, go with you to appointments and make sure you get information in the language you need.
- + **Managing your medications.** The team can show you how to take your medications correctly and make sure you get your refills on time.
- + **Housing, health insurance and social services.** The team can help with applications for food, nutrition, housing and other benefits.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT CARE COORDINATION.

For more information on how to live a long and healthy life with HIV, visit nyc.gov/health and search for **Living with HIV**, or call the New York State HIV Information Hotline at **800-541-2437**.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR, OR CALL 311, TO FIND:

- + HIV treatment
- + Care Coordination
- + Help notifying partners
- + Medicines that protect your partners from HIV (PrEP and PEP)
- + Free condoms
- + Testing for sexually transmitted infections
- + Syringe access program
- + Vaccinations and immunizations
- + Help with housing and other benefits
- + Help with depression or anxiety
- + Help quitting smoking or managing alcohol or drug problems
- + Health Insurance

HIV Care is a free and confidential texting service that can help you find affordable medical care, manage your HIV and access other services in New York City.

Text CARE to 877877 to sign up.

BE HIV SURE

Get treated | Stay healthy | Protect your partner



NYCTM
Health