POZ OR NEG

USING MEDICATION TO PREVENT HIV:
AKA TREATMENT AS PREVENTION (TASP)

Globally, there is a commitment to improve the health outcomes for PLHIV and greatly reduce
the number of new HIV diagnoses through the use of anti-retroviral therapy by both HIV
positive and negative individuals:

Medication can be taken by a person living with HIV which prevents
disease progression and the onward transmission of HIV.

The benefits of an early diagnosis and early treatment means an
individual will live a normal life expectancy and be extremely unlikely
to transmit HIV because the virus becomes **UNDETECTABLE** when
taking treatment consistently as prescribed.

MEDICATION CAN BE TAKEN BY A HIV NEGATIVE PERSON
TO PREVENT HIV TRANSMISSION

**PEP** (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) – if you think you’ve been exposed
to HIV, accessing PEP medication within 72hrs after the potential
exposure (ideally within 24hrs) can significantly reduce the likelihood of
HIV taking a permanent hold in your body. PEP can be accessed from
any public hospital ED, or any Sexual Health Service in Queensland.
Visit [www.getpep.info](http://www.getpep.info) for further details.

**PREP** (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis) involves taking a daily pill to reduce
risk of contracting HIV. PREP works by having an impact on the virus’
ability to establish itself in the body – think of it like ‘the pill’ – except to
prevent HIV instead of pregnancy. PREP is very effective if taken daily as
prescribed.
Visit [www.rapid.org.au](http://www.rapid.org.au) to find out how you can make an appointment
with a doctor to obtain a prescription.

TESTED HIV NEGATIVE?

A great idea is to get in the routine of having regular tests for HIV and
other STIs throughout the year, for example with the change of each
season.

Did you know that HIV is the least common sexually transmitted
condition in Australia?

It’s therefore important to regularly test for STIs like chlamydia,
gonorrhoea and syphilis – as these infections often have no symptoms.
Visit [www.endhiv.org.au/clinic-search](http://www.endhiv.org.au/clinic-search) to find a GP or sexual health clinic to access STI services or call **HEALTH (*** ** *** )**.

Using HIV self-test kits is one way of testing, but routinely visiting GPs, sexual health
clinics, or community-based testing clinics for full sexual health screens is also encouraged.
SO FIRSTLY, WHAT IS HIV?

HIV stands for HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS.

It is a virus that causes the gradual depletion of the immune system over a period of time if left untreated. The immune system is important because it is the body’s natural system of defence against illness, so a person living with untreated HIV is more vulnerable to opportunistic infections.

The term AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) can be likened to an advanced state of HIV, but is now very easy to prevent. Modern treatments are extremely effective, have fewer side effects and if a person is diagnosed early after contracting the virus and commences treatment, the prognosis is a normal life expectancy.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEST RESULTS

WHAT DOES A “NON-REACTIVE” TEST RESULT MEAN?

A non-reactive OraQuick result means that no HIV antibodies have been detected from the oral sample. It’s important to remember, however, that HIV antibodies can take up to three months to be detectable, and so if you’ve had any potential exposures (i.e. condomless anal or vaginal sex) within the last three months, it’s recommended to have another test in three months’ time. This is known as the window period.

WHAT DOES A “REACTIVE” TEST RESULT MEAN?

A reactive OraQuick result means that HIV antibodies have been detected in the mucosal lining of your mouth. Like all screening tests, there is a small chance of the test showing a positive result when you are really negative. Therefore, it is crucially important that any reactive test must be confirmed with a traditional laboratory blood test.

You can contact any General Practitioner or Sexual Health Service to have this test completed. Feel free to give us a call (+61 7 3142 1800 or info@qpp.org.au) to find out where you can go for a confirmatory test, or visit www.endhiv.org.au/clinic-search

HIV IS A MANAGEABLE HEALTH CONDITION.

It does not mean you have AIDS. Treatment (often just one pill a day) is available which helps keep the virus at undetectable levels in the body, ensuring the immune system remains healthy while also preventing the onward transmission of HIV.

TESTED HIV POSITIVE?

MEET QPP’S LIFE+ PEER NAVIGATORS

As a community-based organisation supporting people living with HIV (PLHIV), QPP is uniquely placed to support an individual following a diagnosis. We employ many PLHIV, and some positions such as Peer Navigators involve QPP staff regularly sharing their experience of being diagnosed, considering treatment and living with HIV.

We understand HIV and the misinformation and stigma that exists, so rest assured if you reach out to QPP’s Peer Navigation program it will be a uniquely safe space.

TALKING WITH SOMEONE WHO IS HIV+ CAN REDUCE THE STRESS AND ANXIETY OF BEING TOLD YOU ARE HIV POSITIVE.

Discussions with a PEER NAVIGATOR can include:

1. Understanding how HIV is considered an episodic, manageable illness.
2. How HIV is transmitted, including strategies to manage exposure to other STIs.
3. Treatment information, including how HIV affects the body and the benefits of treatment uptake to prevent disease progression and transmission.
4. Disclosure: when to tell others about your HIV including your legal rights and responsibilities.
5. Managing your health, including the value of nutrition and exercise to prevent disease progression and the value and cautions of complementary and alternative therapies.

The team of PEER NAVIGATORS is representative of the diverse population of people living with HIV and are geographically dispersed across Queensland.

We also have a skilled interdisciplinary team in the Life+ program for PLHIV, and you can contact QPP on (07) 3142 1800, info@qpp.org.au or 1800 328 1800.

HIV IS A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION

Under the Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland), HIV is a notifiable condition. This means that a confirmed positive HIV result is automatically forwarded to Queensland Health by the pathology laboratory.

The team of supportive nurses at Queensland Health who receive these notifications are able to expertly link people into care with specialist HIV doctors, and also provide anonymous contact tracing to sexual partners.

You are only identified in government records by a de-identified name code.

If you have any questions relating to HIV & the law, feel free to give our STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION OFFICER a call (+61 7 3142 1800 or info@qpp.org.au). You can also email us at info@qpp.org.au