

Start Your Journey



I just got diagnosed with HIV. What should I do first?



Take a deep breath!

Thanks to all the advances in treatment, people with HIV are living long and healthy lives—and you can too.



Give yourself time to process the news.

Having HIV today can mean managing a chronic disease, just like diabetes or high blood pressure. If you get in care and stay in care, you too can live a long and healthy life.



Get in care.

Keep in mind that, even if you don't feel sick, the sooner you get in care, the more likely you are to control your HIV.

What next?

You don't have to go through this alone.

Finding support is important. Reach out to a family member, friend, or connect with people who are on your same journey. Look for a local or online HIV support group.



What about a doctor?

Great question—it's important to find a doctor who provides HIV care so you can get all the information you need about different treatment options. It's best when you and your health care provider work together to make decisions about your treatment plan.



Got it. But how do I find the right health care provider?

✓ If you used an HIV **self-test kit**, look on the packaging for a phone number or website where you can get more information. You will find confidential counseling, and they can help you get a referral to a health care provider who can provide an in-person confirmation test.

✓ If you were diagnosed at a health care provider's office, health fair, or testing event, **talk to the provider where you were tested** about how to get in care. They are there to help you.

📍 To find a provider near you, visit: cdc.gov/stophivtogether/treatment.

✓ Finding the right provider for you is important.

If your provider does not seem like a good fit, that's okay. There are a lot of other providers out there. Keep looking and find a provider that works for you. Remember, this is about *your* health.

What does it mean to get on treatment?

HIV treatment involves taking medicines that slow the progression of the virus in your body.

HIV treatment can:



Reduce the amount of HIV in your blood (viral load) until it is no longer detectable on a test, keeping you healthy and well. This is called “undetectable.”



Help prevent AIDS—the most advanced stage of HIV—and other HIV-related illnesses.



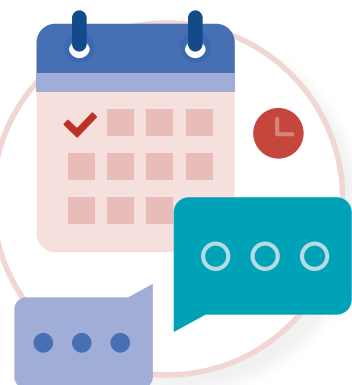
Reduce or even eliminate the risk of transmitting HIV to others.



What can I do to stay in care?

Staying on an HIV treatment plan can be difficult at times.

Think about some challenges you might face and come up with a plan to address them before they happen.





Paying for treatment

There are free federal programs to help cover your costs. Visit findhivcare.hrsa.gov. What are your next steps?



Getting to your appointments

Many providers offer telehealth appointments (via phone or video). What will be your strategy?



Remembering to take your medications

Consider using a daily reminder app, pill dispenser, or other tools to help you take your medications consistently. What method will you choose?



Want to talk to others who are on the same journey as you?

Join a support group or talk to an HIV counselor to help you navigate along your journey. What's something you will do?



Prevent HIV transmission

Not only will becoming and staying undetectable keep you healthy, but it also prevents transmission of HIV to your sexual partners.

As added peace of mind for you and your partner, it can be helpful to talk about using condoms and having them use PrEP, a medicine that can help prevent someone from getting HIV.



Stay healthy in body and mind

Eating well, getting rest, exercising, and not smoking are key steps for anyone to stay healthy, and they are an important part of HIV treatment, too. Practice self-care!

Remember that you're in control

You got this! Being diagnosed with HIV can seem overwhelming at first, but you have lots of options to stay healthy and live your best life.

Visit www.cdc.gov/stophivtogether/treatment to start your journey and learn more.



Ending the HIV Epidemic