

Taking Care: of YOU!

If you have recently been diagnosed with HIV or if you are not currently receiving care, you may feel fearful and overwhelmed. Know that there are many resources and people available to help you and others living with HIV.

New medications have turned HIV into a manageable chronic health condition. With a healthy lifestyle and the right medical care, a person living with HIV can expect to live a normal lifespan.

Still, learning you have HIV raises many questions. Where should you turn for help? Who should you tell? What should you do first? If out of care, how can you get connected back to care? Inside are a few tips to help you during this difficult time. You do not have to face this alone!

Help Links

HIV Basics / Finding the Best Provider for You

<https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics>

HIV Prevention and U=U

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/index.html>

HIV Care and Supportive Services in Your Area

<https://www.in.gov/isdh/23738.htm>

Partner Services Program

www.in.gov/isdh/23721.htm

People Living with HIV Peer Support

www.seroproject.com/state-networks

HIV and the Law

<http://hivmodernizationmovement.org/>



A Guide For Staying Healthy



Indiana Department of Health
HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Division
2N Meridian St,
Indianapolis, IN 46204
866-588-4948
<https://www.in.gov/isdh/17397.htm>

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Taking Care: Your Health

- Find a doctor or licensed healthcare provider who has experience treating HIV.
- Get into care and start HIV medication as soon as possible.
- While the medication can't cure HIV, it can reduce the amount of HIV in your body (called the viral load) to a very low level (called viral suppression). If your viral load doesn't show up in a lab test, this is called having an undetectable viral load.
- Having a suppressed or undetectable viral load helps to keep you healthy, prevents serious illnesses, and promotes wellness.
- Get connected with other people living with HIV for peer and social support.
- Get screened for sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis, and TB (tuberculosis). Having HIV with these conditions can make you more likely to have serious health complications.
- There is assistance available to help cover the cost of health insurance, HIV medications and essential health and support services for low-income people living with HIV and their families.
- See the **Help Links** to learn more about HIV care and supportive services available to anyone living with HIV.



Taking Care: Others in Your Life

- Participate in the *Partner Services Program*. Trained specialists can help you notify your sex or needle sharing partner(s) so they can be offered HIV testing. This is done confidentially, without sharing any information about you.
- You can prevent HIV transmission by taking HIV medications or using condoms, and not sharing needles or drug injection equipment (cotton, spoons, water).
- There is also a major prevention benefit of taking HIV medication and having an undetectable viral load.
- If you have an undetectable HIV viral load, and continue to take your HIV medication, you cannot sexually transmit the virus to your partner. This is known as U=U or Undetectable = Untransmittable.
- A partner who does not have HIV can also take an HIV preventive medicine called PrEP.
- If you are pregnant and not on medication, you can pass HIV to your baby during pregnancy, during labor, or through breastfeeding. Ask your doctor what you can do to protect your child. Effective medication has virtually eliminated HIV among newborns in the U.S.
- Getting and staying on medication is your first line of defense for yourself and others.
- See the **Help Links** to learn more about partner services, HIV Prevention and U=U.



Taking Care: HIV & The Law

- According to Indiana Laws: IC16-41-7-1, IC35-45-21-1, IC35-45-21-3:
 - You are legally required to share your HIV status with people whom you have, or will, engage in sexual or needle sharing activities that can transmit HIV.
 - You may not sell, transfer or donate blood, plasma or semen for artificial insemination.
 - Violations can lead to criminal penalties.
- The confidential *Partner Services Program* can help you notify your partner(s) and is especially helpful if you do not feel safe sharing your HIV status with a partner.
- It may help to have proof that you shared your HIV status with your partner, such as a saved text message where you mention your HIV status to your partner.
- You may have legal questions about privacy, disclosure, discrimination, criminalization and more.
- Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), HIV qualifies as a "disability". Federal and state laws protect people with disabilities from discrimination.
- See the **Help Links** to learn more about Indiana HIV laws, the ADA and other legal resources.

