



## What is Treatment as Prevention?

HIV treatments ensure that an HIV positive person's immune system is healthy and reduces the risk of them getting sick so they can live a long and healthy life.

In addition to helping take control of your health, starting your HIV treatment will also help protect your partners.



Viral load is the term used to describe the amount of HIV in a positive person's blood. The more HIV there is in your blood (and therefore the higher your viral load), the greater your risk of becoming ill because of HIV, and of passing on HIV to your partners.



HIV treatments reduce the levels of HIV (viral load) in a person's blood and other bodily fluids, in almost all cases to 'undetectable' levels. An 'undetectable viral load' means the amount of HIV in someone's blood is so low tests cannot find it. **When an HIV positive person keeps an undetectable viral load, they cannot pass on HIV to their partners.**

This is known as Treatment as Prevention. You might also hear about this described as 'U=U' which stands for 'Undetectable equals Untransmittable'.



See the resources at the bottom of this factsheet for more information.

## When should I start taking treatment?

Previously, it was recommended for people with HIV to wait to start treatment until they started to get sick. Now we know that the earlier someone starts treatment after being diagnosed, the better this will be for their health. Treatment stops HIV from doing damage to the body. It is often recommended to start treatment as soon as possible after being diagnosed.

Once you start HIV treatment, you will need to take it for the rest of your life. Talk to your doctor about when you are ready to start.





## How much does treatment cost?

If you have Medicare card and get treatment from a local chemist, each script will cost:

	Full Price	Concession Card*
Standard	\$41.30	\$6.60
Closing the Gap (CTG) scheme	\$6.60	Free

\*(such as a Health Care Card, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, or a Pensioner Concession Card)



**Talk to your doctor if are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and would like to access the 'Closing the Gap' scheme.**



In some Australian states and territories HIV treatment is free for people with a Medicare card.



If you do not have a Medicare card, there are other options for you to access treatments, so speak to your doctor.



### Other factsheets:

- **PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)** Factsheet
- **HIV Testing** Factsheet
- **PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)** Factsheet



### Other resources:

- **Us Mob and HIV** Booklet
- **Us Mob and HIV** Website
- **Better to Know** Website
- **Young Deadly Free** Website
- **ATSIHIV** Website



### Services for information and support:

- State and Territory HIV Services
- Organisations for People Living with HIV
- Positive Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Network (PATSIIN)
- Organisations to find Aboriginal Medical Services
- Anwernekenhe National HIV Alliance
- AFAO