



# Us Mob and HIV



## Us Mob and HIV

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this booklet may contain names of people who have passed away.

**Us Mob and HIV** was produced by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) in partnership with the Anwernekenhe National HIV Alliance (ANA), and Indigenous projects based in organisations including the Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council, Queensland AIDS Council, Queensland Positive People, and the Western Australian AIDS Council. It is the third edition of a booklet previously known as HIV/AIDS and Us Mob.

**Special thanks** to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have given their yarns interspersed though the booklet. (Their names have been changed to protect their privacy.)

### Artwork

Front cover: Arone Raymond Meeks  
Text illustrations: Gary Dickinson  
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Us Mob and HIV  
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## Cover Art

Title: **Dialogue**

Artist: **Arone Raymond Meeks**

This work represents communication between people on a verbal level and how they feel and respond to each other.

The figures are linked by their hands and crosshatching.

Crosshatching is a symbol for fertility and the earth.

The background depicts elements of the tropics, such as the reef, rainforest and coral spawning. The kidney shapes within the figures represent the emptiness we may feel when responding to confronting situations.



**Us Mob and HIV** aims to increase awareness of HIV, treatments, care and support among a broad audience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. AFAO recognises this resource may not represent all aspects of the diversity within Indigenous communities and cultures. Text from this resource can be changed or adapted to better suit the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

AFAO acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we operate. AFAO pays tribute to Indigenous Elders past and present, and to the expert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project staff and community members who have generously participated in the development of this booklet.

## Who is this book for?

This booklet is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**It contains information that deals with both men's and women's business.**

## Find out ...



**What is HIV?**



**How do I know if I have HIV?**



**How do I know if someone else has HIV?**



**Are their treatments for HIV?**



**Could my family or friends have HIV?**



**How do I protect myself and my community?**



**Find out the facts.  
HIV in our community affects us all.**

## Chris' Yarn

The main issue about HIV for me is about being negative and staying that way.

Staying safe is practicing safe sex. To me it's about having enjoyable sex with condoms and feeling good throughout and after sex.

If you have safe sex, then you don't have the stress that goes with worrying about your sexual health.

It's just a golden rule-  
no condom, no sex.

It's easier if you just  
assume everyone is  
positive and it takes  
away the uneasiness  
of negotiation.



## About HIV

### What is HIV?

HIV is a type of germ called a virus.



HIV damages your immune system. This means your body can't fight germs or other diseases, like a cold or flu.

HIV makes it hard for your body to keep itself well.

Unlike most other germs, there is no medicine to get rid of HIV. Once you get HIV, it stays in your body.

HIV stands for

**H**uman

Only people get it.

**I**mmunodeficiency

It damages your immune system, which is what keeps your body well.

**V**irus

It is a virus (germ).

## What happens when HIV gets into your body?

At first not much happens. There is often no sign (symptoms) that you have HIV, and most people with HIV stay well for years.



But HIV slowly hurts the immune system so it can't protect you from germs. You can also infect others more easily during this time because there is a lot of HIV in your body.



If you don't take treatments, after a while you will begin to get very sick. You may also get sick from illnesses your body would normally fight off. Treatments can stop HIV making you sick and weak.



## What is AIDS?

If people have HIV and don't get treatment, their immune system will become so weak that they will get unusual illnesses. When HIV has gone this far, doctors call it AIDS.

AIDS is very serious. In fact, people with AIDS get diseases that can kill them.

Taking treatment can stop you getting AIDS.



AIDS stands for

<b>Acquired</b>	You can only get HIV from someone who already has it.
<b>Immune</b>	It affects your immune system, which fights off germs.
<b>Deficiency</b>	Your immune system stops working properly.
<b>Syndrome</b>	People get sick from it in different ways.

## How do you get HIV?

Both men and women can get HIV. HIV is passed on through contact with:

- blood
- semen (cum)
- pre-cum
- vaginal fluids
- breast milk



## HIV is passed on by:

### These are high risk !

Vaginal sex without condoms (unsafe sex). HIV can be passed from man to woman or woman to man.

Anal sex without condoms (unsafe sex). HIV can be passed from man to man, man to woman, or woman to man.

The risk of HIV through sex is higher if either person has any kind of sex infection (an STI).

Sharing needles and syringes.

Mother to baby - before the baby is born, during birth or from breast feeding.

There are a number of things you can do to prevent your baby getting HIV, including taking treatments. Talk to your doctor.



### These are lower risk - but still risky

Sharing razors and other cutting, piercing or tattooing equipment.

Getting blood, semen (cum), pre-cum, vaginal fluids or breast milk in cut or damaged skin or in your mouth. This includes risk from a person bleeding from an accident or during fights.



Looking after your skin is important. Cuts on your skin, other open sores, mouth ulcers and swollen gums increase the risk of HIV transmission.





## You can't catch HIV from things like:

- kissing and hugging
- sharing cups or forks
- toilet seats or towels
- mosquitoes
- sweat



## How can I make sure I don't get HIV or pass it on?

### To stop HIV:

**Always use condoms**  
for sex - **EVERY TIME!**  
Condoms stop HIV.



Using lube can  
stop condoms from  
breaking and can feel  
good too.  
Lube can be fun!

**Use clean gear** (needle, syringe and other injecting equipment) every time you inject drugs. Used syringes contain small amounts of blood. Even a small amount of blood can carry germs or disease.



**Cover up cuts,** and if you have to clean up blood, wear gloves (or use plastic bags if you don't have gloves).





**Do NOT** share anything with blood on it including knives, razor blades or needles.



**If you are pregnant,** talk to your doctor or health worker about what you need to do. Women with HIV can have healthy babies without HIV.

**HIV can have a big impact on our community and culture.**

**Sometimes people take more risks when they're away from home. Whether you're at home or away for some fun, keep yourself safe!**

## Getting tested

### How do I know if I have HIV?

**You may have HIV but not know it.**



Some people don't get sick at all when they first get HIV.



A lot of people do feel a bit sick when they first get HIV but don't realise it's because of HIV. The illness feels a bit like having a bad cold or flu, so that's what people think they have.



After the first couple of weeks, most people don't have any illness from HIV for months or years because it can take a long time for HIV to damage your immune system.



## Peter's Yarn

I had an HIV test done about six months ago so I'm probably due for another one.

I have a really good doctor that I go and see and she's quite wonderful. She generally takes an interest in the way I conduct my lifestyle to see if I'm at risk of anything else. She generally tests for everything. Because I'm a good boy (ha!) I really don't freak out about them.

The first time I went for a test I freaked out. I'd never had one before so I didn't know what would come back.

I was so relieved that I just ... I remember just falling into a heap on the floor because it was just so overwhelming and I just like kind of thought "Oh my God! I'm fine", you know.

And I kind of thought, from that point on, that's it, I'm going to be tested regularly, on a regular basis ... and start being a lot more mindful of how I go about my sexual practices.

**The only way to know whether you have HIV is to have an HIV test.**

If you are worried because you have been having unsafe sex or sharing needles, talk to your doctor or health worker about having an HIV test. Let them know if you've had a recent illness that felt like a bad cold or flu.

You can find out where your local sexual health clinic is on the Better to Know website at [www.bettertoknow.org.au](http://www.bettertoknow.org.au)

**You may have HIV even if you currently feel perfectly well. It's important to get tested before your immune system is too damaged.**

**Get tested for HIV!**

And while you're there, ask for a test for other STIs and blood borne viruses as well.

## Your HIV test is your business




Before you get tested you should think carefully about who you want to tell about your plans. It can be good to tell someone you trust so they can give you support. But if you want to keep your business private, think about who you can trust.



Getting tested for HIV is your own private business. Only your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Worker needs to know. They are not allowed to tell anyone about your HIV test results unless you say they can. They are not even allowed to tell anyone whether you have had an HIV test.

If you are worried about seeing someone at your local health centre, you could think about seeing someone in another town or area.

### Everything about your HIV test is private:

-  You have the right to yarn with a counsellor before and after the test. Those conversations are private.
-  Your blood samples have numbers (a code) not names on them.
-  Your results are private business.



## Getting tested for other illnesses

**STIs** Having sex means you could also have other STIs (sexually transmissible infections). Condoms can help protect you from most STIs, but you can still get some STIs even when you use condoms. They can make you really sick and damage your body if you don't get treatment.

If you have an STI, it is easier to get or pass on HIV. You should ask for an STI test at the same time as your HIV test.

There are very high rates of STIs in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Getting an STI test is a step to improving the health of our communities.

**Hepatitis** Sharing needles and syringes can spread HIV but also infections like hepatitis B or hepatitis C. If you have been sharing needles and syringes, tell your doctor and get tested for hepatitis at the same time as your HIV test.

**Lots of STIs have no symptoms.**

**Have regular sexual health checks.**

**And make sure you use condoms and lube.**

**You can talk to your doctor if you are worried about anything.**

## Getting the results

Only your doctor or health care worker can tell you your HIV test results.



If your test result is positive, it means you have HIV.



If your test result is negative, it means HIV has not shown up in your blood. That could be because you do not have HIV, but it could mean you are in '**the window period**'.



The **window period** means HIV might be in your blood but it's too early to show up in a test. It usually shows up in a few weeks but can take up to 3 months. If you have had a test in the window period you will need to have another test a few weeks after your first test to double check the results. You will not be able to have unsafe sex or share needles in the meantime.

Your doctor or health care worker can explain a negative test result and help work out exactly what it means.

**Remember,  
a negative test result doesn't mean  
you will never get HIV.**

**What you do from now on will  
affect your future.**






**Always use condoms for sex. Don't  
share injecting equipment.**

## I have HIV - What now?

Having HIV is serious but it is not the end of the world.

If you do nothing, HIV can lead to illnesses that can kill you. But there are treatments you can take to control HIV so it doesn't get so bad. You will also need to look after yourself and make sure you have people around to support you.

If you have just found out that you are HIV positive, you will need to think about:

-  Who you want or need to tell
-  Getting support from family and friends
-  Getting help from local health services
-  Choosing an HIV specialist doctor who is right for you
-  Which HIV treatment (medicines) to take and when to begin



## My responsibility

If you have HIV, you will have to be very careful not to pass the virus on to other people.

### Remember:



Have safe sex. **Use condoms!**



**Don't share gear** (needles, syringes and other injecting equipment).  
**Don't share knives, razor blades or needles** for practices like body piercing or tattooing.



**See your doctor if you are pregnant.**  
There are a number of things you can do to protect your baby from HIV, including being on treatment.

## Working out who else might need an HIV test

Your doctor or health care worker might ask you for the names of people you have had sex with or who you have shared needles with. If they think those people might also have HIV, they will contact them and ask them to come in for an HIV test. This isn't about blaming you. It is to make sure everyone who might have HIV gets a test.

If the health care worker talks to your previous partners, they will **NOT** tell them your name or why they think the person should be tested.



## Telling sexual partners

It can be really hard to tell someone you have HIV but if you are in a relationship or hoping to start a relationship, trust is very important. Telling them you have HIV lets them make their own choices. It also lets you agree on how you can have sex without passing on HIV.

Your health care worker or counsellor can help you work out what you might want to say, and where and how to say it.

Not telling your partner can also become a legal issue. In some parts of Australia, the law says you must tell your partner you have HIV before you have sex or share injecting equipment.



## You and your community

HIV is an important issue facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Our communities have high rates of STIs (sexually transmissible infections). We don't want high rates of HIV!

You need to look after yourself - your body and spirit. We all have a big role to play looking after family, community, and culture.





## David's Yarn

I found out I was HIV positive around six years ago. I told Mum first and then the rest of the mob. It was a bit hard at first cause they didn't understand and I really had to explain what it all meant.

This was when I really needed care and support, not only care for me but support from health services to help me explain things to my mob.

After about six months I moved into town. I needed to get out of the community to move on with my life. I've been going backwards and forwards just to see Mum and the kids and when I go home I know everyone is cool with my HIV.

What I really needed was the support from other positive mob, someone to talk with when you're down or having problems with the treatments or just confused.

My friends and family are the best care and support for me. It wasn't easy at first. I had to tell them about my health but I'm glad I did coz I couldn't cope without them.

## Care and support

Having HIV can feel like riding a roller coaster, with lots of 'ups' and 'downs'. The good news is that many people with HIV are healthy and getting on well in their lives - working, studying, in relationships, having children, looking after their families, and doing all kinds of things they enjoy.

You will probably need support, particularly in the early days. It can be good to have a yarn but it's important to find the right balance - to get support but make sure you don't have regrets about who you've told. You need to feel safe.

It's up to you who you tell. Care and support can come from different places including family, friends, and health care workers.

Sometimes it's useful to talk to other people with HIV because they may have had similar experiences and they'll have some idea what you're going through.



You might also want to talk to a counsellor. Remember, counsellors aren't just for people who are desperate. They can help you work out everyday stuff, help you sort out your feelings, and help you make plans to improve things.

AIDS Councils and People Living with HIV (PLHIV) organisations have staff to answer your questions. They can tell you what care and support services are near you. (Their details are in the back of this booklet.)

**You are not alone!** There are thousands of people in Australia living with HIV, and many, many more who care about them.



## Treatments

### Taking treatments (medicines)

There are different kinds of treatments for HIV. The main kind is called '**antiretroviral therapy**'. It can't get rid of HIV, but it can slow it down and keep your immune system strong.

Treatments are easier to take than before. Modern treatments are so good that now most people live for many years without getting sick from their HIV.

Treatments are usually free under Medicare, although sometimes there will be a small cost. If you are worried about cost, talk to your doctor, Aboriginal Health Worker or the organisations listed in the back of this booklet.

Some people need to take a few different treatments but many people take just one pill each day. Your doctor will talk to you about which treatment might be best for you.

It is important to take your treatment the way the doctor tells you or it may not work!



## When to start treatment



People with HIV don't always start treatment straight away. You and your doctor will need to talk through the reasons to start now ... or to wait.

There are a few things to think about.

### HIV treatment:



reduces the amount of HIV in your body. This will make you feel better and also prevent you from getting sick.



can reduce the amount of HIV in your body to an undetectable level. That makes it less likely you will pass HIV on to someone else. Ask your doctor for advice.



may cause some side effects (feeling sick). HIV treatments used to make people feel really sick but that usually doesn't happen anymore. Some people still get side effects, but they are usually not so bad and don't last for long.



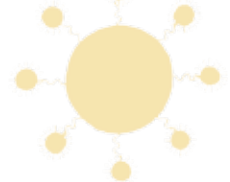
can be difficult to manage because you need to take your treatment exactly as your doctor tells you – at the same time each day. Your doctor or health worker should have some suggestions about how to manage this.



is a long term commitment. Once you start treatment, you should keep taking it. You should not stop because HIV can become **'resistant'** to treatment - meaning the HIV treatments won't work properly if you need to start taking them again.



There can be great benefits to starting treatment soon after you get HIV. Talk with your doctor. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Take your time and have a good long think about what is right for you!



**HIV positive women who are pregnant should start treatment early.**



This will help keep the baby safe from HIV. If you have HIV and are planning to get pregnant, see your doctor. There are a number of things you can do to protect your baby from HIV, including taking treatments. Your actions will make a big difference to whether or not your baby has HIV.

If you find out you are pregnant, see your doctor as soon as you can!

## **Taking a break from treatment**

After taking treatments for a while, some people want to take a break - to stop the side effects or because having to take regular treatments feels like a hassle.

The decision to stop treatment could have a big impact on your future. You will need to plan how to stop taking the medicines safely. It is not safe to take a break without medical advice. Some people get very sick, very fast. Some also develop '**drug resistance**'. This means your treatments won't work well if you need to start them again.



**DO NOT**  
**stop taking your**  
**treatment without talking**  
**to your**  
**doctor first.**

## Russell's Yarn

I'm on treatment at the moment - combination therapy. I have been since 2006.

I used to take breaks to deal with the toxic overload but treatments nowadays are so much better.

I'm a great believer that people should go on treatment once they're diagnosed to help with viral load.

I really support people going on treatment - discussing treatment options and the potential benefits with their doctor, and understanding the treatments they're on.



## What tests will the doctor do?

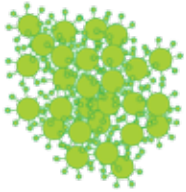
To help work out whether you should start treatment, your doctor will do blood tests to check how much HIV you have in your blood and whether it is damaging your immune system. Everyone is different, so it is important to talk to your doctor about exactly what these tests mean for **you**.

**Checking the virus** – The viral load test shows how much HIV is in your blood. If your viral load is high, there is a big chance of getting sick and HIV can pass to someone else quite easily.

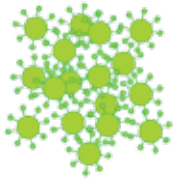
If you go on treatments, your viral load should go way down. The doctor will try to get it down to an 'undetectable' level. That means you still have HIV but there is so little it doesn't show up in the usual tests. This should keep you well and make it hard to pass on HIV.



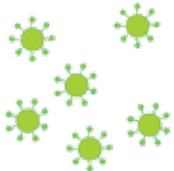
## What your viral load means



**High viral load** - There is a lot of HIV in your blood. This can do a lot of damage, make you sick and makes it easier to pass HIV on to someone else.



**Low viral load** - HIV is being controlled and does not have much power to make you sick. It is not as easy to pass on HIV.



**Undetectable viral load** - Only a very small amount of HIV is in your blood. This should keep you well and makes it unlikely you can infect someone else.

## Checking your immune system

CD4 cell count tests show how strong your immune system is. CD4 cells fight germs, so HIV tries to get rid of them. If your CD4 count is low, you are more likely to get sick. If you go on treatments, your CD4 count should go way up, which will stop you from getting sick.

### What your CD4 cell count test can tell you



**Less than 350** - Your immune system is very weak. Start treatment immediately.



**350 to 500** - Your immune system appears weak. Think seriously about starting treatment.



**More than 500** - Depending on your general health it may be useful to start treatment.



## Can other diseases make things worse?

Some other diseases can cause serious problems for people with HIV:



**Liver sickness** (hepatitis) is serious and it can make HIV harder to treat.



**Lung sickness** (tuberculosis or TB) can be in your body but may not make you sick. If you already have TB (you may not know), HIV will damage your immune system making it more likely the TB will make you sick.



**Sugar sickness** (diabetes) can cause serious illness. Some of the treatments used for HIV increase the chances of a person developing diabetes.

Dealing with more than one illness can be complicated but your doctor can work with you to come up with the best treatment plan possible.

## Regular check-ups

If you have HIV it is important to keep checking your health. You should visit your doctor every few months to check how much HIV is in your blood and whether it is damaging your immune system.

These tests help you and your doctor work out whether it's time to start treatment or how well your treatment is working.

You will also need to keep checking your health in other ways, like looking after your teeth, eyes, heart, bones, and liver. Your doctor or health worker will help you check these things and anything else that is important.

## Complementary therapies

You can do other things to help keep you well. Although they can't stop HIV, complimentary therapies can help you stay healthy, help with treatment side effects, and help if you're feeling sad or angry.





## Complementary therapies include:

- bush medicine (traditional healing)
- herbal medicine (natural medicines)
- good food (nutrition)
- body or foot massage (massage and reflexology)
- needle therapy (acupuncture)
- scented oils (aromatherapy)
- deep resting (meditation)
- yoga

You can find out more about complementary therapies from your local AIDS Council, People Living with HIV (PLHIV) organisation or support group, or your Aboriginal Health Worker. The list at the back of this booklet tells you how to find them.

**Healthy tucker, rest and exercise,  
like playing sport or walking,  
will help keep you well.**

## What can I do if someone I know has HIV?



**It is important not to listen to  
rumours or gossip.**

**Be careful what you say  
and do, and think how you  
would like people to be  
if you had HIV.**

People with HIV need to make their own decisions and live their own lives but there are some things you can do to help:



**Find out** about HIV so you can help them and also stay safe.



**Ask** the person with HIV how they would like you to help (support) them.



**Be there**, hug them and show that you care.



**Help** them eat the right foods and take their treatment when and how the doctor tells them.



**Respect** their business (privacy). It is up to each person with HIV who they tell.



**Talk** to other people in your community about HIV so they can be supportive, stay safe and not worry about getting HIV.

We all have a job to stop the stigma around HIV and STIs.

## Services that can help

This section tells you about the types of services that are available and how to contact them.

**1800 telephone numbers are free** if you are calling from outside the city (although there may be a cost if you call from a mobile).

### AIDS Councils

Most states and territories have an AIDS Council, and some have offices in regional towns. AIDS Councils can tell you more about HIV as well as the best places to get help. Some of the bigger AIDS Councils offer their own support services.

### PLHIV organisations and Positive Living Centres

PLHIV stands for People Living with HIV. There are PLHIV organisations in most states and territories. They provide a safe place for people with HIV to get together, as well as confidential (private) support, advice and referral to services.



In some states, PLHIV services are based in Positive Living Centres, which offer support services like free/cheap meals, vitamin supplements, counselling and complementary therapies.

### **Needle and Syringe Program (NSPs)**

If you inject drugs you can get new gear (needles, syringes, other injecting equipment) and helpful information from Needle and Syringe Programs (NSPs). You can ask the AIDS Council or your health worker where to find one near you. NSPs also give support and advice about HIV, hepatitis and ways to look after yourself.

Make sure you return your used needles and syringes or throw them away safely inside something hard, like a plastic bottle with a lid, so other people don't get hurt by them.

### **Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services**

Aboriginal Medical Services provide confidential testing for HIV and other STIs (sexually transmissible infections), as well as general

health care, counselling and support. Some can provide HIV treatments.

### **Other health services**

A lot of health services (like hospitals, community health centres and private doctors) do HIV and STIs testing, as well as providing HIV treatments, health monitoring and support. You can choose which service you use. If you don't like one or worry that they won't keep your information secret, try a different one.

## **HIV Services**

### **Australian Capital Territory**

AIDS Action Council of the ACT (AACACT)  
16 Gordon Street  
Acton ACT 2601  
02 6257 2855  
[www.aidsaction.org.au](http://www.aidsaction.org.au)

Positive Living ACT  
16 Gordon Street  
Acton ACT 2601  
02 6257 2855  
[www.aidsaction.org.au](http://www.aidsaction.org.au)



## **New South Wales**

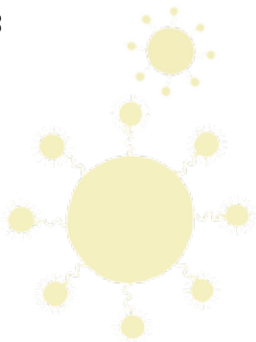
ACON (formerly AIDS Council of NSW)  
414 Elizabeth Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
02 9206 2000  
1800 063 060  
[www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)

ACON Hunter office  
Newcastle 02 4962 7700

ACON Mid-North Coast office  
Port Macquarie 02 6584 0943  
Coffs Harbour 02 6651 6017

ACON Northern Rivers office  
Lismore 02 6622 1555

Positive Life NSW  
Suite 5.2, Level 5  
414 Elizabeth Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
02 9206 2177  
1800 245 677  
[www.positivelife.org.au](http://www.positivelife.org.au)



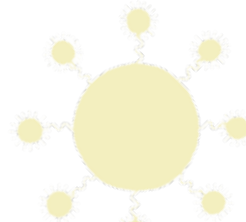
Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF)  
Level 3  
111-117 Devonshire Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
02 9283 8666  
[www.bgf.org.au](http://www.bgf.org.au)

## **Northern Territory**

Northern Territory AIDS & Hepatitis Council  
(NTAHC)  
46 Woods Street  
Darwin NT 0801  
08 8944 7777  
[www.ntahc.org.au](http://www.ntahc.org.au)

NTAHC Alice Springs Office  
14 Railway Terrace  
Alice Springs NT 0870  
08 8953 3172

People Living with HIV/AIDS NT  
PO Box 2826  
Darwin NT 0801  
08 8944 7777



## Queensland

Queensland AIDS Council (QuAC)  
30 Helen Street  
Teneriffe QLD 4005  
07 3017 1777  
1800 177 434 (outside Brisbane only)  
[www.quac.org.au](http://www.quac.org.au)

QuAC Cairns Office  
07 4041 5451

Queensland Positive People (QPP)  
21 Manilla Street  
East Brisbane QLD 4169  
07 3013 5555  
1800 636 241  
[www.qpp.net.au](http://www.qpp.net.au)

QPP Cairns:  
07 3013 5511

## South Australia

Gay Men's Health South Australia  
49a Ormond Street  
Hindmarsh SA 5007  
08 8245 8100  
[www.gmhsa.org.au](http://www.gmhsa.org.au)

Positive Life SA  
16 Malawa Street  
Glandore SA 5037  
08 8293 3700  
[www.hivsa.org.au](http://www.hivsa.org.au)

## Tasmania

Tasmanian Council on AIDS, Hepatitis  
& Related Diseases (TasCAHRD)  
319 Liverpool Street  
Hobart TAS 7000  
03 6234 1242  
1800 005 900  
[www.tascahrd.org.au](http://www.tascahrd.org.au)

## Victoria

Victorian AIDS Council (VAC)  
6 Claremont Street  
South Yarra VIC 3141  
03 9865 6700  
[www.vac.org.au](http://www.vac.org.au)

Living Positive Victoria  
Suite 1, 111 Coventry Street  
Southbank VIC 3006  
03 9863 8733  
[www.livingpositivevictoria.org.au](http://www.livingpositivevictoria.org.au)

## Western Australia

WA AIDS Council (WAAC)  
664 Murray Street  
West Perth WA 6005  
08 9482 0000  
[www.waaid.com](http://www.waaid.com)

## National Organisations

Anwernekenhe National HIV Alliance (ANA)  
PO Box 12  
Northgate LPO QLD 4013  
1300 138 535  
[www.ana.org.au](http://www.ana.org.au)

Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations  
(AFAO)  
PO Box 51  
Newtown NSW 2042  
02 9557 9399  
[www.afao.org.au](http://www.afao.org.au)

National Association of People with HIV  
Australia (NAPWHA)  
PO Box 917  
Newtown NSW 2042  
02 8568 0300  
1800 259 666  
[www.napwha.org.au](http://www.napwha.org.au)

Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug  
Users League (AIVL)  
GPO Box 1552  
Canberra ACT 2601  
02 6279 1600  
[www.aivl.org.au](http://www.aivl.org.au)

Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers  
Association  
PO Box 2167  
Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012  
02 9690 0551  
[www.scarletalliance.org.au](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au)

## Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) can provide testing for HIV antibodies and other STIs (sexually transmissible infections), which are diseases you can get from sex without a condom. They also provide general health care, counselling and support. Some can also provide assistance with HIV treatments.

There are more than 190 ACCHS in Australia. The following state and territory organisations can tell you where your nearest ACCHS is located:

### New South Wales

Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&MRC)  
02 9698 1099

### Northern Territory

Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT)  
08 8981 8433

### Queensland

Queensland Aboriginal & Islander Health Council (QAIHC)  
07 3393 0011

### South Australia

Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia (AHCSA)  
08 8431 4800

### Tasmania

Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Services (TAHS)  
03 6231 3527

### Victoria

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)  
03 9419 3350

### Western Australia

Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA)  
08 9202 1393





## GLOSSARY

### **AIDS**

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome - HIV will become AIDS if it is not treated. AIDS can kill you.

### **Antibodies**

Cells made by the immune system to fight germs

### **Antiretroviral therapy**

Medicine that attacks HIV

### **CD4 (T4) cell**

Part of your blood that protects you from illness

### **Confidentiality**

Your business is kept secret between you and your health worker

### **Counsellor**

A health worker who can talk with you about problems you are having

### **HIV**

Human Immunodeficiency Virus - a germ you can get from sex, sharing needles, and other ways too

### **Immune System**

Your body's way of protecting itself against illness

### **Immunodeficiency**

Your body is not able to protect itself

### **Hep B**

Hepatitis B - a type of liver sickness mainly spread by sex

### **Hep C**

Hepatitis C - a type of liver sickness mainly spread by sharing injecting equipment

### **NSP**

Needle and Syringe Program - a place where people who inject drugs can get equipment, information and support

### **PLHIV**

People Living with HIV

### **STIs**

Sexually Transmissible Infections - diseases that can be passed on when having sex

### **Treatments**

Medicines used to fight disease

### **Viral load**

How much HIV is in your blood

### **Virus**

A small organism (germ) often causing illness

### **Window period**

How long it takes for HIV to show up in a test - usually 6 to 12 weeks after it enters your body



**Australian Federation  
of AIDS Organisations**

Leaders in the HIV community response

**napwha** national association of  
people with HIV australia