# Just diagnosed

Published Date : 21 August, 2012

Nobody plans to get HIV and a new diagnosis can be a shock.

Finding out that you have HIV can also be an emotional and stressful time, but there are plenty of support services to help.

# HIV: The basics

Published Date : 22 August, 2012

**What is HIV?**

HIV is a virus. HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. When HIV enters the bloodstream it attacks the immune system. It destroys immune cells, called CD4 or T cells, and makes copies of itself within these cells. This replication process can gradually destroy more and more T cells. When too many T cells are destroyed, the body can’t fight infections and diseases, which can lead to AIDS .

**What is AIDS?**

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS refers to a combination of serious infections or diseases which can develop when a person’s T cells (immune system) have been harmed by HIV and they can no longer fight off infections. Over time, untreated HIV can cause AIDS to develop.

In Australia, AIDS is rare. However, if you have HIV and don’t find out, or if you remain untreated for a long time, you may be diagnosed with AIDS. Some of the AIDS illnesses may be reversed with treatment.

**How is HIV treated?**

There is no cure for HIV. However, good medications are available to prevent the virus growing. Treatment is usually one or two pills a day, is well tolerated, and strengthens the immune system by keeping the virus at such low levels in the blood it is considered undetectable.

When HIV is undetectable, it is still there but it doesn’t damage the body as much. Studies have shown that when a person has undetectable HIV, known as **undetectable viral load**, HIV is not transmitted to sexual partners, even without condoms. You are not required by law to tell partners about your HIV, but you must use ‘reasonable precautions’ such as condoms or being on effective treatment.  See halc.org.au for more information.

**How is HIV transmitted?**

HIV lives in body fluids, like blood, genital fluids and breast milk. When a person is not on HIV treatment, HIV can be passed from one person to another:

* During vaginal or anal sex without a condom
* During pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding
* When sharing needles

**How is HIV *not* transmitted?**

You cannot get HIV from sharing food, kissing and hugging, sharing a bed, mosquito bites or from using the same swimming pools, showers or toilets as someone with HIV.

HIV cannot survive for very long outside the body. If infected fluid has been exposed to the air for a while, it is unlikely that you could get HIV from it. For example, there are no known cases of people getting HIV from stepping on a used syringe or needle.

**How can I prevent HIV infection?**

Not everyone is aware they have HIV; in fact people who don’t know they have HIV are more likely to pass it on. .

You can avoid passing on or contracting HIV if the person with HIV is on effective treatment, or by using condoms when you have sex, by taking PrEP and not sharing injecting equipment.

Condoms are still recommended as the best protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. However, HIV treatment and maintaining a consistently undetectable viral load is just as effective as condoms at preventing the transmission of HIV.

Treatment reduces the amount of HIV in your body to undetectable levels, meaning sex is safer. Undetectable doesn’t mean the HIV has completely gone away – but it is in such small quantities that it will not be passed on to anyone else.

Many scientific studies have been done which show that no transmissions have taken place during sex where the HIV positive partner has an undetectable viral load, usually from being on effective HIV treatment.

PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis) can be taken **before** a potential exposure. A prophylaxis is something which prevents the spread of an infection or disease. People who do not have HIV can take a pill daily to prevent getting HIV.

Always use new needles and syringes. In NSW there is a needle and syringe program (NSP) that provides sterile injecting equipment for free. Most pharmacies will swap used syringes for new ones or sell sterile equipment for a small fee. An Australia-wide [directory of NSP services](http://www.aivl.org.au/nsp/" \t "_blank)is available on the AIVL website.

**Can I get HIV through oral sex?**

Oral sex with an HIV positive woman (licking or sucking the vagina or vagina lips) is very safe in terms of HIV transmission. There have been no reliable reports of transmitting HIV this way.  Likewise there is no risk of an HIV positive woman transmitting HIV by sucking a man’s penis. Oral sex with an HIV positive man is low risk for HIV but can happen infrequently if the person with HIV is not on treatment. The risk is increased if there are cuts and ulcers, open sores or bleeding in the mouth but is still considered low risk. As with any type of sex, oral sex with an HIV positive person who is taking effective HIV treatment carries zero risk of transmission.

**I think I’ve been exposed – what do I do?**

If you think you have been exposed to HIV, you should ring the [Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Hotline](http://thealbioncentre.org.au/helplines-hotlines/pep-hotline/" \t "_blank) on 1800 737 669 (1800 PEP NOW).

PEP is a special combination of HIV treatments that are given to people who may have been exposed to HIV. It can prevent seroconversion **after** exposure.

To be effective PEP must be started within 72 hours of exposure to HIV, and the sooner PEP is started, the more chance it has to work.

PEP is available at public [Sexual Health Clinics](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/Pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx" \t "_blank) or your Emergency Department.

\*\*New PEP guidelines (2016) state that PEP is *not recommended* where the person with HIV  has an undetectable viral load

**Where can I be tested?**

You can be tested for HIV by your GP or at any [NSW Public Sexual Health Clinic](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/Pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx" \t "_blank). If you have any difficulty getting a HIV test ring Pozhet..You may also be eligible to do a  test at home, known as a Dried Blood Spot (DBS) test. For more information see: Testing options. You can also ring the NSW Sexual HealthInfo Line on 1800 451 624 to discuss your options.

# New Beginnings

Published Date : 23 September, 2015

# Pozhet New Beginnings

# Pozhet New Beginnings

Nobody plans to get HIV and a new diagnosis can be a shock. It is important to have some support or someone you can talk to. Just remember things have changed since the early days of HIV – effective treatment is good news and means you can be healthy and happy.

Today’s HIV treatment reduces the amount of HIV in your body to undetectable levels. This means your immune system can recover and function normally. These days people with HIV on effective treatment (usually 1-2 pills a day) are able to live a long, healthy life, have sex, have children and participate in life just like everyone else.

To refer and for more information, contact Pozhet [pozhet@pozhet.org.au](mailto:pozhet@pozhet.org.au" \t "_blank) or call (02) 9395 0444, freecall 1800 812 404.

# What to expect

Published Date : 24 October, 2012

People with HIV can now live long and healthy lives, have children and have sex without passing on HIV.

HIV treatment consists of one or two pills a day, is well tolerated and reduces HIV in a person’s blood to undetectable levels. Scientific studies have consistently shown that people do not transmit HIV when their viral load (the amount of HIV in the blood) is  undetectable. Their health is also improved, as the immune system can function normally.

With good information, care and support you can live well, have sex, have a career and have children. Staying in touch with your doctor and taking your pills as prescribed is important.

Plenty of things will affect your situation, like your general health, your age when you were diagnosed, and how many years you’ve had HIV before you found out. You should discuss these matters with your HIV doctor and healthcare team.

**Practical information**

This website deals with some of the common questions that arise for people affected by HIV. Have a read of the following pages:

[Where can I go for support?](https://pozhet.org.au/just-diagnosed/where-can-i-go-for-support/)

[How is HIV transmitted?](https://pozhet.org.au/hiv-the-basics/" \l "HIVtransmitted)

[Who do I have to tell?](https://pozhet.org.au/living-with-hiv/legal-issues/)

[How can I stay healthy?](https://pozhet.org.au/living-with-hiv/living-well/)

[Can I start a family?](https://pozhet.org.au/living-with-hiv/becoming-a-parent/)

You can also discuss these issues and more with Pozhet. [Email](mailto:pozhet@pozhet.org.au) or call us on freecall 1800 812 404. We can help you, your partners and family to:

* Find a good doctor
* Get correct and up-to-date information
* Learn about how and when to tell others
* Be informed about HIV and how to prevent passing it on
* Find services that can speak your language
* Access social workers or counsellors
* Find contacts for legal assistance and housing
* Attend events with other positive people

# Where can I go for support?

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# Pozhet

Support, information and connections for heterosexual people with HIV, their partners and family in New South Wales.

## Heterosexual HIV Information Line

**1800 812 404**

## Pozhet New Beginnings

  
New Beginnings is a program for heterosexual people recently diagnosed with HIV.  It offers individual and group support, education and information on living well with HIV, relationships, sex, health, treatment and connecting with others. Call 1800 812 404 or email pozhet@pozhet.org.au  
[Download the New Beginnings poster (pdf, 280kB)](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/77467-POZHET-New-Beginnings-Poster.pdf" \t "_blank)

# [Sexual Health Info Link](https://www.shil.nsw.gov.au/" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.shil.nsw.gov.au/" \t "_blank)Information on HIV and STI testing and prevention, a partner notification tool, and information for Health Professionals.

# Counselling

Immediate phone counselling is available from:

## The HIV Hotline

(02) 9332 9700 or 1800 451 600

## Life Line

13 11 14

Face-to-face counselling services are available from:

## [The Albion Centre](http://thealbioncentre.org.au" \t "_blank)

HIV positive people and their carers, partners or family can access free and confidential psychological services  
(02) 9332 9600.

# Sexual Health Clinics

Most sexual health clinics also offer face-to-face counselling services.

# Public sexual health clinics

Sexual health clinics offer free, comprehensive clinical services to people living with HIV. To find your nearest sexual health clinic:  
See this [list of all NSW public sexual health clinics](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/Pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx" \o "List Sexual Health Services" \t "_blank)

Call the Sexual Health Information Line **1800 451 624** for free and confidential sexual health support and information.

# HIV doctors

It’s important to find a doctor who is skilled in HIV care. These doctors are often called “s100 prescribers”.

# Community Care and Support

## Positive Central

Community support includes counselling, physiotherapy and nutrition for HIV-positive people living in the inner-west of Sydney  
(02) 9395 0444

## HIV Outreach Team (HOT)

Social workers, dieticians, mental health nurses and referrals for HIV positive people living in South-East Sydney.  
(02) 8305 3800

# Legal assistance

## [HIV Legal Centre Inc. (HALC)](http://www.halc.org.au" \t "_blank)

HIV-related legal matters including immigration.  
**1800 063 060**

# Multicultural Support

## [Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service](http://www.mhahs.org.au/" \o "MHAHS" \t "_blank)

Information and support for over 20 language groups.  
1800 108 098

# Community organisations

## [ACON](http://www.acon.org.au" \t "_blank)

Confidential support, practical information  for newly diagnosed and all HIV+ people. ACON specialises in HIV and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) health.  
**1800 063 060**

## [Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations](http://www.afao.org.au" \t "_blank)

National organisation providing information about HIV, as well as leadership and coordination around policy and advocacy in the HIV sector.

## [The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF)](https://www.bgf.org.au/" \o "Bobby Goldsmith Foundation" \t "_blank)

Provides practical support which includes training about self-managing your health.  
**(02) 9283 8666**

## [The Haven – Western Sydney](http://www.thewesternsuburbshaven.com.au/" \t "_blank)

Low cost groceries, social support, massage, internet access and regular lunches.  
**(02) 9672 3600**

## [Hepatitis NSW](http://www.hep.org.au/index.php?article=content/home" \o "Hepatitis NSW" \t "_blank)

Offers information, support and assistance to people affected by hepatitis C.  
**(02) 9332 1853**

## [Karumah Positive Living Centre – Newcastle](http://www.karumah.com.au/" \t "_blank)

Massage, complementary therapies, internet access, referrals, workshops, outings and counselling.  
**(02) 4940 8393**

## [NAPWHA](http://napwa.org.au/" \o "napwa" \t "_blank)

The National Association of People with HIV Australia is Australia’s peak body representing HIV-positive people. Up-to-date information, their friends, carers and families.  
**1800 259 666**

## [NUAA](http://www.nuaa.org.au/" \o "NUAA" \t "_blank)

NUAA is a NSW wide organisation run by and for people who use or have used drugs or are on drug treatment programs. NUAA also runs a needle and syringe program and provides information and support around hepatitis C and HIV. Their magazine User’s News is available on line and two copies each year will be in print.  
**(02) 8354 7300**

## [Positive Life NSW](http://www.positivelife.org.au/" \o "Positive Life NSW" \t "_blank)

Community organisation representing people living with HIV in New South Wales. They publish *Talkabout* magazine and run the Positive Speakers Bureau.  
**1800 245 677**

## [Positive Support Network – Gosford](http://www.positivesupportnetwork.com/" \t "_blank)

Support, advice and referrals available to people with HIV on the central coast.  
**(02) 4323 2905**

## [Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)](http://www.swop.org.au/" \o "SWOP" \t "_blank)

SWOP provides sexual health information and support to people who engage in sex work.  
**1800 622 902**

## [Tree of Hope](http://www.catholiccare.org/community/community-services/tree-hope" \o "Tree of Hope" \t "_blank)

Support for ALL HIV positive people (Catholic Care)  
**(02) 9509 1240**

## [Women Partners of Bisexual Men Service](http://www.womenpartners.org.au/" \t "_blank)

Counselling, support and information for women partners of bisexual men.  
**(02) 9560 3011**

# Living with HIV

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This section provides information about:

* HIV and treatments
* Staying healthy with HIV
* Who you have to tell about your HIV
* How to approach telling someone you have HIV
* Finding your way around the health system
* What you need to know about the privacy, confidentiality and the law
* How to develop or maintain a healthy, fulfilling sex life
* Starting relationships and planning for children
* Where to go to connect with services and other people with HIV: [Directory of services in Sydney](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Directory-for-people-LWHIV-V4-2.pdf" \o "Sydney Support Service Directory for PLHIV" \t "_blank)
* Where to find support in NSW: [Brief summary of NSW services and contact details](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-admin/post.php?post=79&action=edit" \o "Pozhet Newly Diagnosed support page contact list" \t "_blank)

# Becoming a parent

Published Date : 17 October, 2012

There are effective options for couples wanting a baby if you or your partner has HIV. With HIV medications and technology, it is possible to prevent HIV passing between men and women when trying to fall pregnant. Also, with medical management and following guidelines, such as being on HIV treatment and not breast feeding, the chances of an HIV-positive female passing the virus to her baby are extremely low.

## Options for falling pregnant

Options for men and women are included in the new Pozhet resource: [Having a Baby: a guide for HIV positive women, men and their partners](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pozhet_having_a_baby.pdf" \o "Having a Baby" \t "_blank)

### If the female is positive

**Self insemination *–***This involves the man ejaculating (cumming) into a container and drawing the semen into a syringe (without the needle) and then putting it into the woman’s vagina.

### If the male is positive

**Assisted reproduction: Sperm washing** *–* This involves spinning a male’s semen in a special machine, which separates or ‘washes’ the sperm from the seminal fluid. This is done because only the seminal fluid contains HIV. The sperm cells, which do not contain HIV, can then be used to inseminate the egg. Conception is not assured with this option. It is also expensive and not available in NSW.

**Using donor sperm** *–* Some people may choose to use donor sperm. In NSW, new laws mean a child can find the identity of the donor when they turn 18. For those couples that use sperm donated from a friend or family member, there are some tests that need to occur. It’s also important to work through the legal and emotional implications of arrangements with donors who you know.

### Natural conception

Recent studies have indicated that if a partner with HIV in a relationship has an undetectable viral load, there is a greatly reduced risk of transmission. Therefore, after careful discussion with an HIV specialist, some couples who want to fall pregnant choose to have unprotected sex around the time of ovulation.

It is important that you inform yourself and talk to your doctor before making a decision about whether you are prepared to try to conceive this way. You should ensure the positive partner’s viral load is *consistently* undetectable *for six months* and that neither partner has any other sexually transmissible infections.

## PrEP

PrEP which stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis can be taken before a potential exposure. People who do not have HIV can have a pill daily to prevent getting HIV. For example a couple may be attempting to conceive and the negative partner can take a course of PrEP to reduce any potential risk of transmission from the partner with HIV.

International trials have shown that it is effective for use by heterosexual couples where one partner is positive and for men and women who may have sex without condoms and/or who inject drugs or have a partner at risk of HIV. It is also effective for couples trying to conceive. Truvada (the drug used as PrEP) has not yet been licensed for use by negative people as a prevention treatment (PrEP) in Australia. It is licensed for use as a HIV treatment for people with HIV. The USA has approved the use of PrEP and there are limited ways of accessing PrEP in Australia. We will keep you updated about the situation in Australia.

## Protecting your baby

These techniques, used together, are highly effective at preventing mother-to-child transmission:

* **Medications *–***If you’re a pregnant you should stay on HIV medication, or start taking some after consulting with an HIV specialist. Newborn babies to HIV-positive mothers are given a small amount of HIV medication for 4 weeks
* **Delivery** *–* Women with an undetectable viral load are able to deliver the baby vaginally. If a woman’s viral load is over 1,000 a caesarian birth is recommended
* **Avoiding breastfeeding *–*** HIV-positive mothers should not breastfeed

## More information

[Having a Baby: a guide for HIV positive women, men and their partners](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pozhet_having_a_baby.pdf" \o "Having a Baby" \t "_blank)is a comprehensive resource for women and men affected by HIV. It covers low-risk conception and birth, fertility issues and adoption and foster care options.

# HIV and Hep C

Published Date : 15 March, 2016

## HIV and Hepatitis C

New generation direct action antiviral medications are now available in Australia for the treatment of hepatitis C.  
They are very effective and result in a cure for up to 95% of people.

In Australia it is estimated that about 13% of people with HIV will also have hepatitis C. When people are living with HIV and infected by hepatitis C it is known as co-infection. People who are co-infected can be affectively treated for both. If you do have HIV you should be tested for hepatitis C so treatment can start early.

Treatment for hepatitis C is now much simpler for most people with minimal side effects. There is a chance that there might be adverse drug interactions between treatments for hepatitis C and HIV so it is important that people with HIV/hepatitis C co-infection get specialised care.

For more information about hepatitis C,  go to [Living Positive Victoria](http://livingpositivevictoria.org.au/living-with-hiv/sexual-health/hepatitis-c-and-hiv-coinfection/" \t "_blank)

# Legal issues

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## Legal issues and your privacy

You do not have to tell anyone about your HIV status in most situations. There are some exceptions, such as if asked about HIV when applying for life insurance or if you are a dentist, nurse or doctor doing certain procedures. See <http://halc.org.au/publications/guides-to-hiv-and-the-law/> for more information.

There are some circumstances where you might need or want to tell people who are assisting you with travel, migration, welfare, employment or healthcare, or simply for support. However this is your choice. The HIV Legal Centre (HALC) has a comprehensive [guide to disclosure, discrimination and the law.](http://halc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Final-Version-for-distribution.pdf)

If you are HIV positive you do not have to tell your partner before sex, if you are taking reasonable precautions to prevent the other person getting HIV. Reasonable precautions to stop transmission of HIV include:

* Using a condom
* Having a viral load of less than 200 (usually from being on HIV treatment)
* If your partner is on PrEP (a pill taken every day that prevents HIV)

The HIV Legal Centre (HALC) advise people with HIV to discuss these issues with their doctor so they can be sure they are taking ‘reasonable precautions’

For more information see the HALC website which includes a statement about the changes to the Public Health Act which removed the disclosure requirement in 2017. http://halc.org.au/publications/guides-to-hiv-and-the-law/

For more information please read the [NSW Ministry of Health summary.](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Changes-to-the-Public-Health-Act-Preventing-the-spread-of-sexually-tra.._-2.pdf)

**Is my information private?**

If you have disclosed your HIV status to a health worker, your employer, the police or a welfare service, then they must not tell anyone. Health workers should seek your consent before discussing your health with anyone. There are some exceptions that exist to allow health providers to disclose information about your health to other health providers when it *directly* relates to your care or safety.

If you feel your privacy has been breached, contact the organisation where it happened. You can also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner or the Health Care Complaints Commission if you feel your complaint has not been addressed.

If you disclose your HIV status to someone in your personal life (such as a family member or a friend) there are no laws that protect your information. If you are thinking about telling someone, [see our guide on telling others](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Disclosure-Webpiece.pdf) about your HIV status for things to consider and some tips you might want to use.

**Stigma and discrimination**

It is unlawful in NSW for anyone to treat you badly or unfairly because you have HIV.

You can make a complaint to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission or NSW Anti-Discrimination Board.

You can also contact the [HIV Legal Centre (HALC)](http://halc.org.au/)  to get advice about complaints related to discrimination.

This website has information for people with HIV about life insurance and income protection.[http://unusualrisks.com.au/about-hiv-and-insurance#can-i-take-out-an-sickness-and-accident-income-protection-policy-if-i-have-been-diagnosed-with-well-managed-hiv](http://unusualrisks.com.au/about-hiv-and-insurance" \l "can-i-take-out-an-sickness-and-accident-income-protection-policy-if-i-have-been-diagnosed-with-well-managed-hiv)

# Living well

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Like many chronic (long term) health conditions, HIV presents an opportunity to look after yourself better and to re-focus your mindset and physical health.

The following is a basic guide to keeping well:

* Find a good doctor that you trust and are comfortable talking with about any aspect of your health
* Get some exercise – it’s great for relieving stress and keeping your heart healthy. Balance cardio workouts with strength and stretching exercise
* Try meditation and mindfulness. It creates a peaceful space in your day and has proven health benefits
* Eat fresh food-based meals, regularly
* Quit smoking – it can weaken your ability to fight infection and put you at greater risk of cancers, heart disease and even sexual dysfunction. [PositiveLifeNSW](http://www.positivelife.org.au/peer-support/quit-smoking" \o "Quit Smoking" \t "_blank) runs regular free quit smoking programs.
* Remember your teeth and gums. It’s important to brush, floss, drink plenty of water and see your dentist regularly. [Open your mouth: a guide to maintaining a healthy mouth for people with HIV](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/NSWH_Oral-Health-Brochure-FINAL_Single-Pages_LR.pdf" \o "Open your mouth" \t "_blank) is an easy to read booklet about looking after your mouth, gums and teeth. You can also take advantage of a range of [oral health programs](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth/pages/default.aspx" \o "Oral Health Services NSW" \t "_blank) designed to help people living with HIV get good dental care (The m*edicare rebated dental treatment Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) for people with chronic and complex conditions (including HIV) – is no longer funded)*
* Get enough sleep – it’s your healing time
* Ask for help – depression, stress and anxiety affect most of us at some point in our lives. [Counselors with HIV expertise](https://pozhet.org.au/just-diagnosed/where-can-i-go-for-support/) are available to help you work through the tough times or challenging issues
* Develop your social network – everyone needs interests and friends. Pozhet is one place to start to meet others with HIV. Our [events calendar](https://pozhet.org.au/events/) includes workshops, retreats and support groups. Pozhet is for all positive women and men, single, married, their partners and family members

## Vitamins, minerals and supplements

The best vitamins and minerals come in the fresh food that you eat. However, some people choose to take vitamins and minerals to give themselves extra support. It’s important to discuss anything you take with your doctor or dietitian, as some vitamins may interact with other medications – doing more harm than good. For example, it’s important to avoid St John’s Wort and grapefruit with some medications.

For people that struggle to get their nutritional requirements, a medical practitioner or dietitian will prescribe nutritional supplements. If you’re concerned about your diet, weight or energy levels, you should discuss it with your HIV specialist and ask to be assessed by an ‘Accredited Practicing Dietitian (APD)’.

If you do need to take vitamins or any supplements, some of them can be bought at wholesale prices from [ACON’s Vitamin Service](http://www.acon.org.au/hiv/support-and-services/" \l "vitamin-servcie" \t "_blank).

## More information

Pozhet can provide you with more information or help you find support, such as:

* Specialist HIV social workers, dietitians or physiotherapists across NSW
* Discounted nicotine patches at your pharmacy
* Free oral health care and quit smoking support

## Booklets and fact sheets:

* Our [Tips for living well](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/B2.2_Tips_For_Living_Well.pdf" \t "_blank)factsheet contains practical ideas developed by straight men and women living with HIV
* For women, we developed the [Looking after yourself](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/B2.2_Looking_After_Yourself.pdf" \t "_blank) factsheet
* Pozhet contributed to a [directory of support services](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Directory-for-people-LWHIV-V4-2.pdf" \o "Directory of Support Services" \t "_blank) for people in Sydney. (published August 2014)
* [Your Body Blueprint](http://www.yourbodyblueprint.org.au/" \o "Body Blueprint" \t "_blank) is an Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) website with advice about living healthily with HIV

[](https://i1.wp.com/pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Your-Body-Blueprint_215-91.gif.png?ssl=1)

# Negative Partners

Published Date : 18 May, 2016

### HIV Negative partners

Many people living with HIV are in serodiscordant relationships. This means they in a relationship with a person who does not have HIV. The partners do not always get as much support or information even though they often have lots of questions about things like transmission, treatment, conception, and pregnancy.

This section of the website will focus on information for negative partners. These days most people who are HIV positive go on treatments straight away. Once they have been on treatment for six months they will probably have “undetectable” levels of HIV in their blood which means they are not infectious when they have sex with you.

**If your partner is not undetectable or you think they may not be taking HIV treatment you may be interested in the following information.**

**PrEP** (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis) is a daily medicine (taken as a pill) that helps you stay HIV-negative. If your partner is on effective treatment PrEP may not be necessary.  Read more about PrEP [here](https://pozhet.org.au/prep/). [Link to PrEP page]

**PEP** (Post-exposure Prophylaxis) is an emergency medicine you can take within 72 hours of possible exposure to HIV. Find out more about PEP on the [Relationships and sex page](https://pozhet.org.au/living-with-hiv/relationships-and-sex/). [Link to relationships and sex]

**Condoms** are an effective way to prevent transmission of HIV and most sexually transmitted infections.

Check out the Pozhet booklet ‘Live Loving and HIV’ It features real stories and quotes from HIV negative and positive partners.

You may also be interested in some FAQ’s regarding the latest information about transmission for both partners.

# Relationships and sex

Published Date : 17 October, 2012

### Relationships and sex

People with HIV can have a normal sex life, just like anyone else. With effective HIV treatment, transmission of HIV can be stopped and people can live long, healthy lives.

### Relationships where one person is HIV positive and one is HIV negative

Many HIV-negative men and women have relationships with HIV-positive people. The technical term for this is a **[serodiscordant](https://pozhet.org.au/glossary/" \l "Serodiscordant)** relationship. Some people talk about *‘pozneg’* or *‘magnetic’* couples.

There are many such couples enjoying successful long-term relationships. The person without HIV can stay negative, and both partners can enjoy all the things other couples do – including having sex.

There are, however, particular challenges that crop up. Pozhet’s resource **[Life, Loving and HIV](https://pozhet.org.au/pozhet-resources/)** covers some of these issues, including:

* Recent studies show that people with an undetectable viral load (usually from being on effective treatment) do not transmit HIV. The law has also changed: you do not have to tell your sexual partner about your HIV status if you are taking ‘reasonable precautions’ to prevent transmission, such as taking HIV treatment or using condoms. See Legal Issues page)
* Telling other people
* Keeping sex fun and safe
* Communicating effectively and supporting each other
* The real experiences of people in serodiscordant relationships

[Download](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pozhet_life_loving.pdf)**[Life, Loving and HIV](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pozhet_life_loving.pdf)**[(pdf)](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/pozhet_life_loving.pdf)

### Sex

You can still have a healthy, enjoyable sex life with HIV. It’s important to be well informed and to find out all you can about HIV and how to reduce the chance of passing it on to your partner.

Research has shown that when a person is taking HIV treatment as prescribed and their viral load has been undetectable for six months there is no chance of passing HIV on to others during sex.   See ‘Treatment and Prevention’ on the Treatments page.

*‘I often tell a partner they will be safer with me than with anyone else.’* Jenny

*‘It’s just as important for me to say what I like sexually as it is to let him know I’m HIV positive.’* Saria

### Slip up?

If you’re worried about being exposed to HIV, call the 24-hour Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) hotline on **1800 737 669**. PEP is a course of medication that can prevent HIV infection if taken as soon as possible after any potential exposure. See **[GetPEP info.](http://getpep.info/)**

**Recent PEP guidelines (2016) state that PEP is *not recommended* where the source has a consistently undetectable viral load.**

### PrEP and PEP

It is important to understand the difference between PEP (Post exposure prophylaxis) and PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis). A prophylaxis is something which prevents the spread of an infection or disease.

**PEP** is a course of medication taken within 72 hours **after** exposure to HIV. (see above)

**PrEP** can be taken **before** a potential exposure. People who do not have HIV can take a pill daily to prevent getting HIV. For example, a couple may be attempting to conceive a baby and the negative partner can take a course of PrEP to reduce any potential risk of transmission from the partner with HIV. It is a way to reduce anxiety when trying to conceive.

You can watch a short YouTube video about PrEP and HIV Prevention [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFo0NU27Rus" \l "t=36)

### When both partners have HIV

For some people with HIV, having a partner who also has HIV can have some benefits. These couples can support each other and share their wisdom and experience of HIV.However they may also find they need to have more in common than just HIV.

Make sure your health is monitored regularly and discuss any issues with your HIV doctor.

### More information:

* The Pozhet booklet, **Life, Loving and HIV: a heterosexual’s guide to serodiscordant relationships**covers the world of relationships between serodiscordant, pozneg or magnetic couples. *The booklet states that HIV treatments significantly reduce transmission. Studies have now proved beyond doubt that people with HIV who are on effective treatment are not infectious during sex.*

# Telling others

Published Date : 17 October, 2012

## Planning to tell someone

Deciding whether to tell someone you have HIV can be challenging. Remember that you are in control of who you tell and who you don’t. If you do decide to tell, a bit of planning can make it easier.

Telling someone you have HIV is often called ‘disclosure’

Before you disclose to someone:

* Think about why you want to tell them (you don’t have to unless you’re going to have sex with them)
* Be sure that you trust them – after you tell them you can’t control how they react or who they tell
* Have a plan for what you’re going to say, including how to answer awkward questions
* Be prepared for both good and bad reactions
* Choose carefully when and where you tell them. Somewhere private and comfortable is best
* Make sure you have up to date knowledge about HIV, so that you can give them any information they might need. Remember, most people don’t know much about HIV
* Think about getting advice from someone who has experience with telling others. Pozhet can refer you to a counsellor or arrange for you to chat to someone who has been through it themselves.

**Dealing with reactions**

Some people will be supportive when you tell them you have HIV, but others might be worried or react negatively.

Give them time to adjust – it’s important to remember that people’s first reaction is often not their last reaction. Most people don’t know much about HIV and its treatment. They might need to talk to someone else for support. Talk to them about who they can tell, and who they can’t. Point them to some organisations they can talk to and maybe give them some information to read.

*‘Those that matter don’t mind, and those that mind don’t matter.’*

## Telling sexual partners

In NSW you no longer are required by law to disclose that you have HIV or a sexually transmitted infection (STI) before having sex. However you must take reasonable precautions to prevent transmission of HIV, such as being undetectable or using a condom.  See [our page on Legal issues](https://pozhet.org.au/living-with-hiv/legal-issues/" \o "Legal" \t "_blank) for more information.

It can be hard to know when or how to start a discussion about HIV and sex. A social worker at a specialist HIV clinic can help you find the words you need. Pozhet’s booklet [‘Life, Loving and HIV’](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/POZHET_LifeLovingandHIV_A5.pdf" \o "Life Loving HIV" \t "_blank)   covers some of the issues that HIV-positive people in relationships with HIV-negative people can experience.

*‘I met someone I really fancy. I plucked up the courage to tell him that I was HIV positive. He was cool about it and said it didn’t matter.’* Julian

## Telling children

Most parents with HIV choose to tell their children about it at some point. Deciding when and how is a personal decision for you and your family. For some parents it’s great to be open and in control of the information their children get about HIV. Others prefer not to worry their children or run the risk of their children telling other people.

When weighing it up, parents might consider their own health, their children’s age and who else their child can turn to – like close friends or family that already know.

Before you tell anyone, including your children, it’s important to be informed and in control of what and how you tell.

### *Getting support with children*

Many parents find Camp Goodtime an important source of support for their children and themselves. Camp Goodtime is the national camp for children and families living with HIV. Talking to friends at the camp can mean there is less need to disclose to people in their everyday circle of friends. To find out more about Camp Goodtime, contact Sydney Children’s Hospital [Paediatric HIV Service](http://www.sch.edu.au/departments/hiv/" \t "_blank).

## More information:

* Our booklet [‘Life, Loving and HIV’](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/POZHET_LifeLovingandHIV_A5.pdf" \t "_blank) covers the fulfilling but challenging world of relationships between serodiscordant, pos-neg or magnetic couples
* The fact sheet, [Telling others](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/B2.4_Telling_Others.pdf" \t "_blank), gives practical advice on when and how to tell others, including some tips on dealing with people’s curiosity about living with HIV
* Positive Life’s fact sheet, [Telling children about HIV](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/B2.4_Telling_Your_childCpdf.pdf" \t "_blank), shares the experiences of parents with HIV and why or how they told their children about it

# Treatment

Published Date : 17 October, 2012

**HIV is a manageable medical condition**. HIV [treatment](https://pozhet.org.au/glossary/" \l "Treatment) allows most people with HIV to lead long and productive lives, and can also [prevent HIV transmission](http://www.pozhet.org.au/treatment-and-prevention/" \o "Treatment and Prevention). Evidence shows that current HIV treatments are well tolerated and effective.

## What is HIV treatment?

HIV is treated with antiretroviral therapy ([ART](https://pozhet.org.au/glossary/" \l "ART" \o "ART Click to view the glossary for a description of the term" \t "_blank)). Most treatments require you to take one or two tablets a day. There are different medication options and you should work with your HIV doctor to find the right one for you.

HIV treatment reduces the amount of HIV in your blood stream, to the point where HIV cannot be detected via a blood test – this is called ‘[undetectable viral load’](https://pozhet.org.au/glossary/" \l "Undetectable). This means that your immune system can recover or remain healthy. Medication must be taken as prescribed. Stopping and starting, or taking them randomly, can lead to drug [resistance](https://pozhet.org.au/glossary/" \l "Resistance).

## When should I start treatment?

It is important to regularly discuss your situation with your HIV doctor. We know that starting HIV treatment can improve your long-term health and significantly reduces the chance of transmitting HIV. There is now compelling evidence which shows that starting treatment as soon as possible after diagnosis improves health outcomes. However,  taking HIV medication requires commitment so it’s best to start when you are ready. Things you and your doctor should consider include:

* Your [viral load](https://pozhet.org.au/glossary/" \l "Viral). HIV treatment reduces the amount of HIV in your blood
* Your [CD4](https://pozhet.org.au/glossary/" \l "CD4): CD4 cells  (also known as T-Cells) play an important role in our ability to fight off infection. To manage HIV, a doctor will take a sample of blood to see how many CD4 cells are present and from that work out how well you are fighting the HIV infection. In Australia HIV treatment is now available for everyone with HIV, and is subsidised if you are Medicare eligible.
* Relationships and family: if you are in a sexual relationship or thinking about having children. Being on treatment virtually eliminates your risk of transmitting HIV to your partner during sex, and to your baby during pregnancy and birth.
* Your lifestyle: When you start treatment, you need to think about how it’s going to fit in with your life. You should take your pills as prescribed every day… Will you take them in the day or at night? Do you need to take them with food? What will work best for you?  If you are going through a rough patch or feeling very stressed, you might need to put some strategies in place to make sure you don’t miss doses. Talk to your doctor if  you have any concerns.

## What about side effects?

HIV medications have greatly improved in recent years and most people find modern HIV medications easy to take. Side-effects are usually non-existant or manageable and should be discussed with your doctor.

## More information

* In NSW HIV S100 treatments are now free! You can also get your script filled at a community pharmacy if you want. For more information See Positive Life’s website [The Choice is Yours](http://thechoiceisyours.positivelife.org.au/" \t "_blank)
* The [AFAO](https://www.afao.org.au/" \t "_blank), [Aidsmap](http://www.aidsmap.com/HIV-treatment/cat/1378/ " \t "_blank) and [NAPWHA](http://napwha.org.au/health-treatment/hiv-treatment" \o "NAPWHA Treating HIV" \t "_blank) websites have detailed information about treatment.
* Taking Eviplera? What should I eat? Have a look at [some examples](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/PiDietaryRequirementsOfEviplera.pdf" \o "Eviplera Dietary Requirements" \t "_blank) of meals from the NHS (UK).

# Multicultural and language support

Published Date : 15 November, 2012

**Calling Pozhet using an interpreter**

If you would like to call Pozhet with the help of a translator, call the [Translating and Interpreting Service](http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/help_with_translating/) (TIS) on 131 450.

When you call, tell the operator:

* the language you speak;
* your phone number; and
* that you want to call Pozhet on 1800 812 404.

This is a free and confidential service.

**Using an interpreter at your health appointments**

Most government health services (like hospitals, sexual health clinics and community health centres) provide a free interpreter service. They can also provide some telephone interpretation. You should ask about the interpreter service when you book an appointment.

**Someone who understands your culture**

If you want to talk to someone from your own or a similar culture who understands HIV and the Australian health system, you might think about accessing a Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS) support workers, called ‘co-workers’.

MHAHS have male and female co-workers from Asian, African, European, Middle Eastern and South American backgrounds who understand what it is like to be living with HIV and dealing with cultural issues. These co-workers can provide on-going emotional support and help with accessing services.

A co-worker can:

* Talk with you about your situation
* Help a family member understand your situation
* Help your doctor or social worker understand your needs
* Go with you to appointments

You can arrange meetings with your co-worker at times that suit both of you. All services are free and confidential.

Phone MHAHS on (02) 9515 1234 or [visit their website](http://www.mhahs.org.au/).

**Translated information**

The MHAHS website has [translated information about HIV](http://www.mhahs.org.au/) in more than 20 languages.

# Page full width template

Published Date : 20 December, 2013

## full width

# Pozhet Resources

Published Date : 10 July, 2013

Our resources are listed here for viewing, they are in pdf format only, word document versions will be added soon. Clicking the link will open the pdf in the same tab, or right click the link to open up the document in a new tab or window.

### babyHaving a Baby

a guide for HIV positive women, men and their partners

[Print version on A4](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/POZHET_HavingABaby_resource_spreads_A4landspace.pdf" \o "Having a Baby " \t "_blank) two pages per side  (570 KB 12 pages)

[Viewable version](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/POZHET_HavingABaby_A5.pdf" \o "Having a Baby A5" \t "_blank)  (480KB 22 pages)

### lifeLife, Loving and HIV

a heterosexual’s guide to serodiscordant relationships

[Print version on A4](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/POZHET_LifeLovingandHIV_resource_spreads_A4landscape.pdf" \o "Life, Loving and HIV" \t "_blank) two pages per side  (781 KB 10 pages)

[Viewable version](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/POZHET_LifeLovingandHIV_A5.pdf" \t "_blank)  (650KB 18 pages)

### Changing Lives - A resource for heterosexual people living with HIVChanging Lives

[Changing Lives – Introduction](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingIntro1.pdf)

[Changing Lives – Positive Men](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives1.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Positive Men" \t "_blank)

[Changing Lives – Positive Women](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives2.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Positive Women" \t "_blank)

[Changing Lives – Couples](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives3.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Couples" \t "_blank)

[Changing Lives – Partners](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives4.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Partners" \t "_blank)

[Changing Lives – Telling Others](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLive5.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Telling Others" \t "_blank)

[Changing Lives – Family Matters](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives6.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Family Matters" \t "_blank)

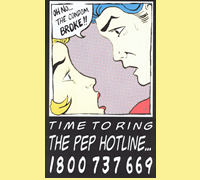
[Changing Lives – HIV Illness](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives7.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - HIV Illness" \t "_blank)

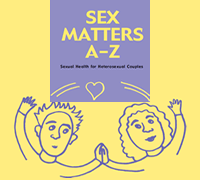
[Changing Lives – Talking Treatments](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives8.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Taking Treatments" \t "_blank)

[Changing Lives – Tips For Living Well](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives9.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Tips for Living Well" \t "_blank)

[Changing Lives – Getting Support](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ChangingLives10.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - Getting Support" \t "_blank)

[Changing Lives – The Complete Resource](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Changing_Lives.pdf" \o "Changing Lives - The Complete Resource - Chapters 1-10" \t "_blank)

[PEP](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/pep.pdf" \o "PEP " \t "_blank)

[Sex Matters A – Z](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SexMattersA-Z.pdf" \o "Sex Matters A- Z" \t "_blank)

[STI Chart](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/STIChart.pdf" \o "STI Chart" \t "_blank)

[Masculinity](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/masculinity.pdf" \o "Masculinity" \t "_blank)

[Women](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/women.pdf" \o "Women" \t "_blank)

[Straightpoz Study 1](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Straightpoz1.pdf" \o "StraightPoz Study 1" \t "_blank)

[Straightpoz Study 2](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Straightpoz2.pdf" \o "StraightPoz Study 2" \t "_blank)

[Peer Support](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/peer.pdf" \o "Peer Support" \t "_blank)

[Serosilence and Serosharing](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/serosilenceserosharing.pdf" \o "Serosilence and Serosharing" \t "_blank)

[Get It Straight](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Get_it_Straight.pdf" \o "Get It Straight" \t "_blank)

[Telling Others](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/B2.4_Telling_Others.pdf" \o "Telling Others" \t "_blank)

[Tips For Living Well](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/B2.2_Tips_For_Living_Well.pdf" \o "Tips for Living Well" \t "_blank)

[Looking After Yourself](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/B2.2_Looking_After_Yourself.pdf" \o "Looking After Yourself" \t "_blank)

[HIV Medications Dosage Chart](https://pozhet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/HIV-Medications-Dosage-Chart.pdf" \o "HIV Medications Dosage Chart" \t "_blank)

# Pozhet Workshop Weekend & Retreat September

Published Date : 14 July, 2016

Morisset NSW 16th – 18th September 2016

ALL APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON Wednesday 17th August 2016

A copy of this form must be completed for every adult wishing to attend (including partners)

Your Name

      First

      Last

Year Of Birth

Your Address, including Suburb and Postcode

Your Phone Number

Your Email

Do You Have Any Dietary Requirements?

None

Diabetic

Vegetarian

Other

Dietary Requirements Details

Do You Have Any Mobility Restrictions?

 None

 Wheelchair

 Walker

The Retreat is a weekend program where people have an opportunity to meet others, support each other, build confidence, share and learn skills about living well with HIV. The weekend is made up of organised activities as well as times where you can catch up with other people, relax or use some of the sport and recreation facilities available. Pozhet expects people to participate in all the planned groups and activities from Friday evening through to Sunday afternoon. If you are unable to do some of the physical activities or don’t feel up to saying much that’s fine. There are many ways you can still be involved, eg listening and supporting others. We appreciate your involvement with us

I am able to attend for the whole weekend (Friday dinner- 3.pm Sunday)

Yes

No

If NO, Please state why

Will You Be Coming to the Weekend By Train

Yes

No

Have you ever been to a Pozhet Retreat before?

Yes

No

Is there other information we need to know to assist your stay at the Pozhet Retreat?

I understand and agree that I am responsible for my own participation at all times. I will notify the organisers if I am unwell or cannot participate in any activity during the retreat.

**Retreat Participation & Confidentiality Agreement** I understand that only accommodation, meals and activities are covered by Pozhet. We do not cover travel costs. \*\*Please note cancellations with less than 7 days notice may attract a fee payable by the applicant. Please let us know in advance…this Retreat is a popular event. The Pozhet Weekend Workshop & Retreat is strictly alcohol and recreational drug free. Anyone found using alcohol or drugs (including marijuana) will be asked to leave immediately. This event is funded by NSW Health and there are strict protocols we must all abide by. Your cooperation is appreciated.

I as a participant of the Retreat, may have access to information of a highly personal and confidential nature. This includes medical conditions and treatment, sexuality, relations with family members, names of individuals with HIV, their family and friends, and other identifying information. I agree that I will not discuss the content of any personal or group discussions or disclose information of a personal or confidential nature to anyone else.

Please Enter Your Name Here to Agree to the Paragraphs Above

Date of Agreement

Please complete the following section, if applying to bring young children

Pozhet will try to meet the needs of parents who have young children who need to be with them on the weekend.

Name Of Child

Date Of Birth of Child

Particular needs eg. Cot or high chair

Dietary needs of child

I understand that I am responsible for young children under 16 I bring to the retreat and that there is currently no childcare or organised activities for children. Type your name below to agree

Please type your name here to agree to the above terms regarding children

### ALL APPLICATIONS CLOSE on Wednesday 24th August 2016

Successful applicants will be notified before the 26th August For more information please contact Pozhet  
Freecall 1800 812 404  
Email pozhet@pozhet.org.au

