

Dear Folks,

As we wrap up 2024, we reflect on a challenging but rewarding year. On behalf of the Pozhet team, a heartfelt thank you for being part of our journey!

Welcome to the final edition of the Pozhet Client Newsletter for 2024, where we're excited to share some highlights and updates. This year, we continue to focus on tackling stigma and discrimination. Our campaigns and activities aim to challenge misconceptions and highlight the experiences of people living with HIV. Our collaboration with the Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS) and Positive Life NSW continues to thrive.

World AIDS Day is observed on the 1st December. This year's theme, *It Starts with Me*, reminds us all of the important role we play in raising awareness and combating HIV stigma. Let's take action by promoting understanding, standing up for equality, and supporting those living with HIV.

Thank you again for your support throughout the year. Visit our [website](#) for updates and resources. Wishing you and your loved ones all the best for the season and the new year ahead.

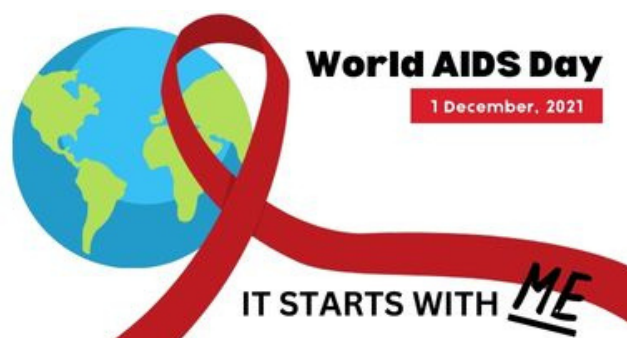
All the best from Gadigal Land (Sydney)
Chi (Pozhet Manager)

HIV Awareness Week and World AIDS Day

This year's World AIDS Day theme is: **It Starts with Me**. This includes a few key points.

Raising awareness of HIV starts with me. We acknowledge that although new HIV diagnosis's are declining, the fight isn't over. Therefore, raising awareness of HIV is essential. This includes increasing awareness about information around HIV testing, treatment and prevention options to our community, friends and family. This also includes the use of condoms, knowing your status, use of sterile injecting equipment, regular sexual health testing and use of pre and post exposure prophylaxis (PrEP and PEP).

Dispelling myths and misinformation about HIV, starts with me. HIV stigma and discrimination is still experienced by many due to ignorance and misinformation. Stigma and discrimination can discourage people at risk of HIV from seeking prevention, testing and treatment. It also affects the wellbeing and daily lives of people living with HIV.



Celebrating those we have lost from HIV/AIDs and showing support for all those who live with HIV starts with me. Although people living with HIV today can live a normal healthy life, we must continue to take action against inequality, promote understanding and advocate for human and health rights.

Doxy-PEP, Prep and Mpox

Doxy-PEP involves taking the antibiotic doxycycline after sex, to prevent getting an STI. It is like PEP but for STIs. Taking doxy-PEP reduces your chance of acquiring syphilis and chlamydia by about two-thirds but is less effective at reducing your chance of getting gonorrhoea. This is ideally taken within 24 to 72 hours after sex without a condom. Currently it is recommended for GBMSM who have had a recent bacterial STIs, are at risk of getting a STI or are having sex with men and women/partners with a uterus. Talk to your doctor to learn more. For more information: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/Publications/doxy-pep-shared-decision-making.pdf>

The guidelines from ASHM have been updated regarding the use of **PrEP**, which is medication that can be taken by people who may be at risk to prevent HIV infection. ASHM guidelines now state PrEP is "recommended as a crucial HIV-prevention strategy for all people who are at risk of HIV infection, that is, gay and bi-sexual men who have sex with men (GBMSM) and their partners, transgender people, heterosexual men and women who may be at risk of HIV, and people who inject drugs". This means heterosexuals are able to use PrEP if they perceive that they are at risk. Please see your doctor if you are considering starting PrEP. For more information: <https://www.pan.org.au/>.

Mpox is a viral infection spread by intimate skin to skin contact including sex. GBMSM and their partners are at highest risk. Symptoms include fever/chills, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, swollen lymph nodes, a painful rectum (proctitis) and rashes, ulcers or pimple-like lesions or sores in the genital region but can be all over the body. Mpox cases are rising in NSW please see your doctor if you notice these symptoms. You can be vaccinated to prevent Mpox infection. For more information: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/monkeypox>

Vaping and Nicotine Dependence

What are the health risks of vaping?

Known vaping risks include poisoning, seizures, toxicity from inhalation, addiction to nicotine, lung injury, and adverse effects on cardiovascular and oral health.

What are some of the recent vaping reforms in Australia?

- Vapes with a nicotine concentration of 20 mg/mL or less can be lawfully purchased without a prescription from retail pharmacies by individuals over 18 years old. Some circumstances require a prescription, such as when an individual is under 18 years of age.
- It is illegal for any other retailers – including online sellers - to sell any type of vape or vaping product. You can report a complaint to NSW Health using this online form - <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/tobacco/Pages/let-us-know-reports-complaints.aspx>
- Individuals who have a vape on them for personal use will not be targeted under these changes.

What support is there to quit smoking or vaping?

The healthiest decision for people who smoke or vape is to stop.

Try these tips:

- Talk to your doctor or trusted health professional. They can help you manage challenges with quitting and staying quit.
- NSW Quitline. 13 78 48 (13 QUIT) Professional support greatly increases the chance of successful quitting. Quitline is free and confidential.
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy Helps reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
- My QuitBuddy. A free app that helps you get, and stay, smoke-free and vape-free.

Nicotine vaping products are not the first line approach to quit smoking. Discuss with your doctor whether vaping products could help you if other approved methods have not worked.

Did you know?

Under the NSW Smoke-free Environment Act 2000, vaping is banned wherever smoking is banned.

HIV and Healthy Eating



Good nutrition is essential for everyone, especially for those living with HIV. Eating a balanced diet can help manage HIV-related symptoms and support overall health.

Here are some key tips for maintaining a healthy diet

- Include plenty of vegetables of different types and colours, along with legumes and beans.
- Eat fruits regularly.
- Choose wholegrain or high-fibre grain foods like bread, rice, pasta, oats, quinoa, and barley.
- Include lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds, and legumes.
- Choose mostly reduced-fat versions of milk, yoghurt, cheese, or their alternatives.

Additional tips

- Drink plenty of water.
- Limit foods high in saturated fat, like pastries, processed meats, burgers, and fried foods.
- Use healthier fats, such as oils, nut spreads, and avocado, instead of butter and cream, coconut and palm oil.
- Reduce salt intake by choosing lower-sodium options and avoid adding salt while cooking or at the table.
- Limit sugary foods and drinks like sweets, soft drinks, and fruit drinks.
- If you consume alcohol, do so in moderation. Pregnant or breastfeeding women should avoid alcohol altogether.

If you have specific nutritional concerns, consult your HIV doctor, specialist or a dietitian.

Latest Research and Data Update

HIV Diagnoses in Australia



A recent Kirby Institute report shows HIV diagnoses in Australia continue to drop, with some areas seeing drops as high as 90%. Overall, HIV cases have fallen by 33%, this includes a huge 64% reduction among Australian-born men who have sex with men.

“These long-term reductions tell us our strategies to eliminate HIV transmission—such as testing, HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and treatment—are working. With effective treatment, HIV levels in the blood are so low they are undetectable, meaning HIV can not be transmitted to sexual partners. In other words, undetectable equals untransmittable (U=U). However, we also need to carefully examine the inequities revealed by the data and intensify our efforts to respond to HIV,” says Dr. McGregor who is the lead of the Surveillance Innovation Group at the Kirby Institute.

HIV rates remain low among people who inject drugs and sex workers thanks to effective peer education programs. However, there has been a small increase in HIV cases over the last 10 years among people born overseas and through heterosexual sex. In 2023 over a third of the cases were late-stage diagnoses.

Moving forward, culturally appropriate and timely testing is critical to addressing these challenges. Efforts must focus on reducing inequalities, particularly among priority populations such as overseas-born men who have sex with men and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Check out the full article here:

<https://www.kirby.unsw.edu.au/news/hiv-diagnoses-trending-down-australia-despite-2023-increase>

Stigma Remains the Biggest Barrier

My name is Loretta, and I am a social worker at RPA Sexual Health where we provide HIV care for about 450 people. My colleagues and I recently completed a study to examine the experience of people getting an HIV diagnosis in this era of Undetectable equals Untransmissible (U=U), treatment as prevention (TasP) and the availability of Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for sexual partners of people with HIV. We were hoping that people may feel more confident getting a diagnosis when they know that there are effective treatments, they can't pass on the virus if they are on effective treatment and their partners can choose to take PrEP.

Stigma remains the biggest barrier to adjusting to an HIV diagnosis and we found that stigma often comes from within the person who fears rejection and discrimination. The study tells us we still have a lot of work to do to support people living with HIV. Please let your healthcare provider know if you would like a referral to a support service.



Japanese Style Crab Pancakes



Time 40 mins Serves 4 Rating Easy

Ingredients

- 3 spring onions (including green tops), sliced
- 200 g green cabbage, core removed, finely shredded
- 150 g sweet potato, skin on, grated
- 1 cup bean sprouts
- 200 g raw or cooked crab meat
- 1/2 cup wholemeal plain flour
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 egg
- olive or canola oil spray
- 1 tbs hoisin sauce, to serve
- freshly ground or cracked black pepper

Method

Reserve ½ cup sliced spring onion green tops and place remainder in a large bowl with cabbage, sweet potato, bean sprouts and crab meat. Sift flour over vegetables then mix to combine. Break egg in a cup with ¼ cup water and whisk with a fork. Pour over vegetables and stir well to form a dry mix. Heat a large non-stick frypan over medium-high heat and spray liberally with oil. Place ¼ mixture (1 cup) on one side of the pan and press down with a spatula to create a pancake of 1½ cm thickness and 10cm diameter. Add another ¼ mixture to the pan then place lid on and turn down to medium heat. Cook for 6 minutes or until the bottom side is golden and firm. Lift each pancake and spray with oil then flip and brown on reverse side for 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate, keep warm and repeat with remaining mixture. To serve, thinly spread each pancake with a teaspoon of hoisin sauce and sprinkle with reserved spring onions and pepper.

This recipe was published on the Healthy Eating Active Living Website <https://www.healthyliving.nsw.gov.au/food/healthy-recipes#>

Quiz

1. What is the date World AIDS Day falls on?
2. What is the theme this year for World AIDS Day?
3. What phrase is used to describe the fact that a person with HIV is on effective treatment and can't transmit the virus to sexual partners?
4. What remains the biggest barrier for people living with HIV?
5. What is one of the best ways to increase your chances of successfully quitting smoking or vaping?
6. What important action does the 2024 World AIDS Day theme, *It starts with Me*, encourage people to take in the fight against HIV stigma?
7. What is Australia's national flower, known for its unique appearance and significance in Aboriginal culture?
8. What is the difference between a glockenspiel and a xylophone?

Read and Watch recommendations



- Yellowface - Rebecca Kuang
- Tracks - Robyn Davidson
- Intermezzo - Sally Rooney
- Death by a Thousand Cuts - Shashi Nhat
- Camp Zero - Michelle Min Sterling



- Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont Spelling Bee - ABC
- RuPaul's Drag race - Stan
- Thou Shall Not Steal - Stan
- Bad Sisters - Apple Tv
- Severance - Apple Tv
- Agatha All Along - Disney +

If you have any recommendations for movies, must-read books or binge-worthy TV series, email them to us at pozhet@pozhet.org.au

Answers to Quiz

1. 1 December
2. It starts with Me
3. Undetectable equals untransmissible (U=U)
4. Stigma
5. Talking to your doctor or a health professional
6. Confronting ignorance and dispelling myths
7. Wattle
8. Glockenspiel bars are made of metal and xylophone is made of wood