pozhet
HETEROSEXUAL HIV SERVICE

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024

Dear Folks,

Welcome to the 2024 Winter Edition of Pozhet Client Newsletter. I hope this finds you happy (and warm!) It has been another couple of big months over here at Pozhet. We have been providing advice on the NSW rollout of HIV self testing vending machines which launched in early June. You can find more information about this innovative HIV testing option at: https://mytest.health.nsw.gov.au/

We have also just wrapped up HIV Testing Week, we used this opportunity to increase the visibility of our Pozhet stigma & discrimination videos (see below for more details) Once again, on behalf of Pozhet I would like to extend our gratitude to our clients who warmly shared their insights & time into making this campaign a reality (and success)! The first and second videos were adopted across NSW for HIV Testing Week, with many partnering services hosting the videos on their social media platforms. Based on the impressive number of views and positive feedback from services and clients alike, we have also nominated this campaign for a NSW Health Award. We will keep you posted on the outcome, So stay tuned!

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

HIV Testing Week

The first week of June is HIV Testing Week.This annual event serves as a significant opportunity to advocate for the uptake of regular HIV testing. This year, NSW Health is highlighting how important it is for healthcare professionals to add HIV testing into their routine practices, with a particular focus on addressing the discrimination and stigma often faced by clients.

Diagnosing HIV early is important because it allows people to start treatment sooner, helping them live long and healthy lives.

I'm thrilled to draw your attention to a very useful resource developed by us here at Pozhet: a series of educational videos that clear up common myths and promote understanding about HIV. Furthermore, this initiative challenges the widespread discriminatory attitudes towards HIV within the broader community.

These videos explore important topics, addressing questions such as "What does undetectable viral load mean?" and "Can HIV be transmitted through activities like kissing or licking?" Through clear and simple explanations, viewers are provided with accurate information, debunking myths and reducing stigma associated with HIV.

Each video serves as a valuable tool in promoting understanding and empowerment within our communities. By sharing accurate information and challenging misconceptions, we make important progress towards creating a supportive and inclusive environment for people living with HIV.

As we collectively observe HIV Testing Week, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting awareness, destigmatisation, and accessibility to healthcare services for all individuals.

Australia's commitment to U=U

As of May 23rd, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has signed Australia's commitment to Global Declaration to affirm U=U.

Now joining Canada, the United States of America and Vietnam in commitment to the following 9 action areas:

1. To develop national strategies for sustainable and effective national U=U programs that are informed by the communities and individuals most impacted.
2. To integrate U=U science into HIV guidelines and official communications.
3. To implement policies to address inequities, decrease barriers, and increase access to treatment, care, and diagnostics.
4. To include U=U as a mandatory component of existing HIV prevention, care, and treatment research, services, policies, and programs.
5. To use U=U in health education and promotion efforts to generate demand and increase utilisation of testing, prevention, care, and related services.
6. To conduct U=U awareness campaigns for key populations and the general public to decrease stigma.
7. To improve access to and uptake of HIV treatment and viral load testing to ensure equitable access to the benefits of U=U.
8. To recognize U=U as a primary HIV prevention method and/or adopt combination prevention strategies that prioritise prompt diagnosis, linkage to care, and treatment adherence support for people living with HIV.
9. To train, support, and require the HIV prevention and care workforce, including clinicians, peers, and other support professionals to deliver accurate and concise U=U messages during service delivery.

You can find out more and read the declaration at:
https://preventionaccess.org/c2a/

Quick refresher of U=U

The first U is for Undetectable.

Undetectable means that the HIV virus that weakens the immune systems and can spread to others is so low it is almost impossible to detect it in the blood. When classified as undetectable, the virus's ability to cause health issues is significantly reduced. (better for you)

The second U is for Untransmissible.

When undetectable, HIV is Untransmissible. Meaning there is zero risk of spreading the virus to partners or from blood-to-blood contact. Most people will be able to achieve this within six months of starting treatment. (better for you and others)

FAQs

Does U=U mean testing negative using HIV test?
A HIV test will still return a positive result if a person is undetectable. Most HIV tests look for HIV antibodies and these are still present in the blood regardless of viral load. This means that having a positive HIV test doesn't indicate that you are no longer undetectable or have a high viral load.

What is the difference between Antibody and Viral load ?
HIV antibodies are a marker in the blood that the body has been exposed to HIV. Viral load is the amount of the virus is in the blood. The higher viral load the more the virus is impacting the immune system and the easer it spreads to others.

How long does it take to get to U=U?
Most people can reduce their viral load to undetectable within six months of taking medications. However if treatment ceases the viral load can return within two weeks

25 years young at Yaralla House

On 8 March residents, families, friends and NSW Health staff came together to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Yaralla House, the NSW HIV and Dementia care residential service.

The service was originally established in 1998 as The Bridge in Glebe, and partnered with community-based AIDS dementia and HIV psychiatry services to support community members with wraparound care. Yaralla House is the only service of its kind in the world, with a unique nursing-led approach that focuses on bringing joy, dignity and high-quality specialist and holistic residential dementia care for people living with HIV.

The anniversary event featured speakers including residents, family members, chaplaincy services and key health staff, and a chance to celebrate over cake and other delights. It was also a special opportunity to honour the staff of Yaralla House, with the majority providing care for over a decade, and some even two decades. The event was a wonderful occasion to commemorate the past and present care for residents, and the great support and community that will continue into the future.

Increased services in western Sydney

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF) is now offering services out of our new office in Parramatta. Our expansion into western Sydney will allow us to continue to provide support and care for people living with HIV in new communities.

Our committed team are here to offer BGF's full range of HIV-related support and community services, and we are thrilled to be working alongside sector partners so we can reach new community members living with HIV.

Since 1984, BGF has been Australia's longest running HIV charity providing individualised psychosocial and community care to thousands of Australians living with HIV, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or gender.

How we can help

Case management: Providing those community members with complex needs with more holistic support and care coordination.

Case work: Supporting our community members in practical, financial and emotional ways whilst linking them to the services they need.

Financial counselling: Supporting and advocating for people with HIV who are also experiencing significant financial stress, impacting their overall quality of life.

HIV/AOD integrated services: Providing support to people with HIV who are also experiencing homelessness, alcohol and/or drug dependency issues, providing a wide range of HIV-related support to address their physical, mental and social needs.

Community support program: Delivering regular in-home community-based practical assistance and care. NDIS services are available.

Health and wellbeing programs: Programs that develop practical life-skills, support self-expression, reduce social isolation and build peer connections.

Get in touch:
Sydney: Level 3, 111-117- Devonshire Street, Surry Hills
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02 9283 8666
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[+Connect]

On Thursday 21 March, Positive Life hosted +Connect OUTWEST at Casula, an inclusive social event welcoming all people living with HIV, along with partners, family, and friends.

Ana, representing Pozhet, had the pleasure of attending this face-to-face event. It was a great opportunity to chat with a diverse group of people and share experiences in a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere while enjoying a drink and delicious tapas.
These +Connect events are held at various venues across Sydney and have a profound impact on many people living with HIV. They create a safe space to build and connect with a supportive network of people who share similar experiences and empathise with their journey.

Positive Life NSW, an organisation run by people living with HIV, for people living with HIV, offers a wide range of social events, workshops and support groups tailored to both men and women. If you want to get in touch with other people living with HIV check out their upcoming social events at:
https://www.positivelife.org.au/get-support/social-support/

Stir-fry kangaroo and vegetables in oyster sauce

Time 45 mins **Serves** 4 **Rating** Easy

Ingredients
500g kangaroo fillet
5 cups of a variety of vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned)
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 teaspoons minced ginger
¼ cup oyster sauce
¼ cup soy sauce (reduced salt if available)
2 tablespoons oil

Method
1. Cut kangaroo fillet into thin slices.
2. Cut vegetables into thin slices or strips.
3. Mix together the garlic, ginger, oyster sauce and soy sauce.
4. Heat the oil in a large frypan, add meat. Cook using moderate to high heat, for 5 to 10 minutes (depending on the size of meat pieces). Stir all the time.
5. Add vegetables and sauce mix to the meat and cook for another 5 minutes or until vegetables are just tender. Stir all the time.
6. Serve with rice or pasta.

This recipe was published in Quick Meals for Kooris at Home resource by Nutrition Services, Central Coast Local Health District.

Quiz

1. What anniversary was Yaralla House celebrating this year?
2. What HIV home-testing options are available?
3. What month is men's health week?
4. What does U=U stand for?
5. In what city will the Olympics 2024 be held in?
6. What percentage of people living with HIV experienced HIV-related stigma and discrimination? 15% 30% 57% 76%
7. At the 2024 Olympic games, who are the other three countries that the Matildas will play in group B? (otherwise known as the pool of death)
8. True or false stigma and discrimination impacts people with HIV quality of care negatively?
9. What does BGF stand for?
10. What is the distance of the path around Uluru?

Read and Watch recommendations

- Open Water - Caleb Azumah Nelson
- Bite Back - Hannah Ferguson
- Tell Me Again - Amy Thunig

- True detective - Binge/ Foxtel
- Mr Inbetween - Binge/ Foxtel
- Orangutan jungle school - Prime
- Lord of the rings (the trilogy) - Stan, Prime, Binge/foxtel
- First Inventors - SBS

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

Answers to Quiz

1. 25 years
2. DBS, ATOMO
3. June
4. Undetectable = Untransmissible
5. Paris
6. 57%
7. USA, Germany, Zambia
8. True
9. Bobby Goldsmith Fountadation
10. 10km