

I'm Healthy

When living with HIV you can stay healthy and have a good quality of life by engaging with effective care. Medication continues to improve but at the moment there is no cure for HIV.

Important steps to stay healthy include:

- Educate yourself and ask questions
- Get on treatment as soon as you are ready and take it as prescribed
- Have regular check-ups with all of your care team
- Talk honestly with your health care providers (*its confidential and they can support you*)



1/3 Poynton Terrace, Newton, Auckland
Tel: 09 309 3989 | Email: office@bodypositive.org.nz

Freephone: 0800 HIV LINE
www.bodypositive.org.nz



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AND I LIVE
WITH HIV**



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HIV Treatment

Guidelines recommend that you start treatment as soon as possible to control the virus. The question of 'when to start' will depend on your readiness, which includes both a desire to maximise your health and reduce your infectiousness. Treatment is a life-long commitment and you need to be emotionally and physically ready.

HIV Medication is prescribed by HIV Specialists at no cost. HIV medication is publicly funded for everyone irrespective of residency and is available from community pharmacies.

Taking medications consistently every day can be challenging. There are tools and tips to make this easier. It's vital to have the right medication that works best for you and your care team can help with these decisions.

Your Care Team

Your care team is there to support you to stay healthy. They will monitor your health by regularly checking your HIV viral load and CD4 levels. The most important thing is for you to talk honestly with them about your health, as there could be things important to you that don't show up through testing.

Wrap around care will keep you healthy and includes your GP, nurses, pharmacists, social workers and peer support.

Staying Healthy

You need to look after your overall health, diet, exercise, not smoking, reducing alcohol and recreational drugs, all play a part in staying healthy. While HIV can be controlled through treatment it is still present and taking additional steps will help achieve your best quality of life.

HIV brings changes and challenges, but it's a virus, not a lifestyle. There are many things you can do to help yourself manage these challenges. Talking to a counsellor can help and talk to your doctor about how you are feeling. Support from family, friends and other people living with HIV can really help.

Undetectable

Effective treatment suppresses HIV to the point where it is undetectable in lab tests. At this point HIV doesn't impact your immune system and you can't pass HIV to sexual partners. You can have a joyful sex life without the need for condoms. And you can have children without concern of HIV transmission. Before achieving undetectable you can always use condoms or have your partner take PrEP to prevent HIV transmission.

For further details visit:

bodypositive.org.nz/imhealthy