

What is Undetectable?

When the levels of HIV in the blood are extremely low (< 200 copies/ml), it is referred to as an undetectable viral load or virally suppressed.

U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable)

People who achieve and remain undetectable by taking antiretroviral therapy (ART) as prescribed cannot sexually transmit the virus.

More than 20 years of scientific evidence shows there is

ZERO RISK

of HIV transmission to your sexual partner when you have an undetectable viral load

U=U & Pregnancy

U=U means you can safely have sex without a condom in order to become pregnant. This includes giving birth and being a sperm donor. There may be some risk when breast-feeding but this needs more research.

TREATMENT MAKES HIV UNDETECTABLE AND UNTRANSMITTABLE (U=U)

People living with HIV who are on treatment and have an undetectable viral load (<200 copies/mL) cannot sexually transmit HIV



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MY BOYFRIEND IS LIVING WITH HIV



**I'M NOT BECAUSE HE
CAN'T PASS
IT ON**



**I'M LIVING WITH HIV
BUT I CAN'T
PASS IT ON**

HIV Diagnosis & Care

It's important to test regularly to identify as soon as possible whether you have acquired HIV. HIV treatment is fully funded in New Zealand for everyone and you should start treatment as soon as you are ready and stay healthy.

Disclosure

People living with HIV are entitled to an active, healthy sex life. **You do not have to tell a sexual partner that you have HIV, as long as you take appropriate precautions to prevent sexually transmitting HIV.** In New Zealand, '*appropriate precautions*' is considered to be using a condom for vaginal or anal sex. Being undetectable means taking appropriate precautions and may be a defence against nondisclosure.

While adhering to treatment so you maintain an undetectable viral load offers more protection than condom use, undetectable has yet to be recognised under NZ law.

PrEP & PEP

Since undetectable means zero risk of HIV transmission, there is no need for PreP or Pep (*or even condoms*) when having sex with an undetectable partner.

Decades of research/studies have proven it is one of the most highly effective options for preventing HIV.

When somebody does not achieve an undetectable viral load

It's important not to make assumptions nor stigmatise people. A small number of people living with HIV are unable to maintain an undetectable viral load for various reasons such as: limited treatment options; access to treatment; other medications impacting effectiveness of treatment; treatment resistance or other health issues.

What about Viral Blips?

Viral Blips are when there is a minor rebound of virus despite being on medication. These can show up on Lab tests but do not effect transmission. WHO states that any value under 1000 copies virtually eliminates the risk of transmission.

Does having an STI affect things?

No. Having an STI does not affect U=U.

What about Injecting Drug users?

As with all other groups, people who inject drugs will not transmit HIV through sexual activity when undetectable. Research suggests that being undetectable can help prevent HIV transmission through the sharing of injection drug use equipment, however there is **not sufficient** evidence to say that there is no risk of transmission.