

## POZ OR NEG

### USING MEDICATION TO PREVENT HIV: AKA TREATMENT AS PREVENTION (TASP)

Globally, there is a commitment to improve the health outcomes for PLHIV and greatly reduce the number of new HIV diagnoses through the use of anti-retroviral therapy by both HIV positive and negative individuals:



Medication can be taken by a person living with HIV which prevents disease progression and the onward transmission of HIV.

The benefits of an early diagnosis and early treatment means an individual will live a normal life expectancy and be extremely unlikely to transmit HIV because the virus becomes **UNDETECTABLE** when taking treatment consistently as prescribed.

### MEDICATION CAN BE TAKEN BY A HIV NEGATIVE PERSON TO PREVENT HIV TRANSMISSION



**PEP** (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) – if you think you've been exposed to HIV, accessing PEP medication within 72hrs after the potential exposure (ideally within 24hrs) can significantly reduce the likelihood of HIV taking a permanent hold in your body. PEP can be accessed from any public hospital ED, or any Sexual Health Service in Queensland.

Visit [www.getpep.info](http://www.getpep.info) for further details.



**PrEP** (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis) involves taking a daily pill to reduce risk of contracting HIV. PrEP works by having an impact on the virus' ability to establish itself in the body – think of it like 'the pill' – except to prevent HIV instead of pregnancy. PrEP is very effective if taken daily as prescribed.

Visit [www.rapid.org.au](http://www.rapid.org.au) to find out how you can make an appointment with a doctor to obtain a prescription.

### TESTED HIV NEGATIVE?



A great idea is to get in the routine of having regular tests for HIV and other STIs throughout the year, for example with the change of each season.

Did you know that HIV is the least common sexually transmitted condition in Australia?

It's therefore important to regularly test for STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis – as these infections often have no symptoms

Visit [www.endhiv.org.au/clinic-search](http://www.endhiv.org.au/clinic-search) to find a GP or sexual health clinic to access STI services or call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

Using HIV self-test kits is one way of testing, but routinely visiting GPs, sexual health clinics, or community-based testing clinics for full sexual health screens is also encouraged.

# GETTING PREPARED TO START YOUR HOME HIV SELF-TEST



1

**ATOMO HIV TEST INSTRUCTIONS.** Be sure to follow these instructions strictly so that you perform the test correctly and obtain a valid result.

2

**QUEENSLAND POSITIVE PEOPLE (QPP) INFORMATION FLYER** - this sheet! Which includes general information on HIV. QPP provides access to a range of services that promote the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV in Queensland, delivered in accordance with international best practice standards. These services include peer navigation, peer support, treatment and health support services, and a stigma and discrimination services program.

## SO FIRSTLY, WHAT IS HIV?



HIV stands for **HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS**.

It is a virus that causes the gradual depletion of the immune system over a period of time if left untreated. The immune system is important because it is the body's natural system of defence against illness, so a person living with untreated HIV is more vulnerable to opportunistic infections.

The term **AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)** can be likened to an advanced state of HIV, but is now very easy to prevent. Modern treatments are extremely effective, have fewer side effects and if a person is diagnosed early after contracting the virus and commences treatment, the prognosis is a normal life expectancy.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEST RESULTS



ABOVE: THIS IS A NON-REACTIVE RESULT.

### WHAT DOES A "NON-REACTIVE" TEST RESULT MEAN?

A non-reactive Atomo result means that no HIV antibodies have been detected from the sample. It's important to remember, however, that HIV antibodies can take up to three months to be detectable, and so if you've had any potential exposures (i.e. condomless anal or vaginal sex) within the last three months, it's recommended to have another test in three months' time. This is known as the window period.



ABOVE: THIS IS A REACTIVE RESULT.

### WHAT DOES A "REACTIVE" TEST RESULT MEAN?

A reactive Atomo result means that HIV antibodies have been detected. Like all screening tests, there is a small chance of the test showing a positive result when you are really negative. Therefore, it is crucially important that any reactive test must be confirmed with a traditional laboratory blood test.



You can contact any General Practitioner or Sexual Health Service to have this test completed. Feel free to give us a call on (07) 3013 5555 or 1800 636 241 to find out where you can go for a confirmatory test, or visit [www.endhiv.org.au/clinic-search](http://www.endhiv.org.au/clinic-search)

# HIV IS A MANAGEABLE HEALTH CONDITION.



ABOVE: THIS IS THE SYMBOL FOR AN UNDETECTABLE HIV-STATUS

It does not mean you have **AIDS**. Treatment (often just one pill a day) is available which helps keep the virus at undetectable levels in the body, ensuring the immune system remains healthy while also preventing the onward transmission of HIV.

## TESTED HIV POSITIVE? MEET QPP'S LIFE+ PEER NAVIGATORS



As a community-based organisation supporting people living with HIV (PLHIV), QPP is uniquely placed to support an individual following a diagnosis. We employ many PLHIV, and some positions such as Peer Navigators involve QPP staff regularly sharing their experience of being diagnosed, considering treatment and living with HIV.

We understand HIV and the misinformation and stigma that exists, so rest assured if you reach out to QPP's Peer Navigation program it will be a uniquely safe space.

## TALKING WITH SOMEONE WHO IS HIV+ CAN REDUCE THE STRESS AND ANXIETY OF BEING TOLD YOU ARE HIV POSITIVE.

Discussions with a **PEER NAVIGATOR** can include:

- 1 Understanding how HIV is considered an episodic, manageable illness.
- 2 How HIV is transmitted, including strategies to manage exposure to other STIs.
- 3 Treatment information, including how HIV affects the body and the benefits of treatment uptake to prevent disease progression and transmission.
- 4 Disclosure: when to tell others about your HIV including your legal rights and responsibilities.
- 5 Managing your health, including the value of nutrition and exercise to prevent disease progression and the value and cautions of complementary and alternative therapies.

The team of **PEER NAVIGATORS** is representative of the diverse population of people living with HIV and are geographically dispersed across Queensland.

We also have a skilled interdisciplinary team in the Life+ program for PLHIV, and you can contact QPP on (07) 3013 5555, [info@qpp.org.au](mailto:info@qpp.org.au) or 1800 636 241.

## HIV IS A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION



Under the **Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland)**, HIV is a notifiable condition.

This means that a confirmed positive HIV result is automatically forwarded to Queensland Health by the pathology laboratory.

The team of supportive nurses at Queensland Health who receive these notifications are able to expertly link people into care with specialist HIV doctors, and also provide anonymous contact tracing to sexual partners.

You are only identified in government records by a de-identified name code.

If you have any questions relating to HIV & the law, feel free to give our **STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION OFFICER** a call (07) 3013 5555 or 1800 636 241. You can also email us at [info@qpp.org.au](mailto:info@qpp.org.au)