

# Us Mob and HIV

4<sup>TH</sup>  
EDITION  
2021



[www.usmobandhiv.org.au](http://www.usmobandhiv.org.au)

## Us Mob and HIV

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this booklet may contain names of people who have passed away.

**Us Mob and HIV** (4<sup>th</sup> edition) is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It contains information that deals with both men's and women's business.

It was produced by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) in partnership with the Anwernekenhe National HIV Alliance (ANA). The first two editions of this booklet were known as 'HIV/AIDS and Us Mob'.

We recognise this resource may not represent all aspects of the diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures. Text from this resource can be changed or adapted to better suit the needs of Indigenous communities.

We acknowledge and pay respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work.

### Artwork

Front cover: Arone Raymond Meeks

Back cover: Toby Cedar

Copyright remains with the artists.

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Us Mob and HIV

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**Find out the facts.**

**HIV in our community affects us all.**

Special thanks to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have given their yarns in the booklet. (Names may have been changed to protect their privacy.)

This booklet is supported by an unrestricted grant, with no content or design input, from Gilead Sciences.

## Cover Art

Title: **Dialogue**

Artist: **Arone Raymond Meeks**

This work represents communication between people on a verbal level and how they feel and respond to each other. The figures are linked by their hands and crosshatching. Crosshatching is a symbol for fertility and the earth. The background depicts elements of the tropics, such as the reef, rainforest, and coral spawning. The kidney shapes within the figures represent the emptiness we may feel when responding to confronting situations.



## Back Cover Art

Title: **Floral Nam Dari**

Artist: **Toby Cedar**

This art piece has the colours of the Torres Strait Islander flag throughout it – with green representing land, black representing our people, blue representing the sea, and white representing our Dari (Headdress). The coconut leaves, hibiscus and frangipani signify the tropical lifestyle as they are seen throughout the Torres Strait. The Turtle plays a special part in the island lifestyle as both a food source and many families' totem. Inlaid in the turtles' shells are the Dari which is the main symbol on our flag to represent all our Torres Strait Islands.



# About HIV

## What is HIV?

HIV is a type of germ called a virus.

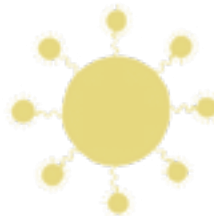
HIV damages your immune system. This means your body cannot fight germs or other diseases, like a cold or flu.

HIV makes it hard for your body to keep itself well.

Unlike most other germs, there is no medicine to get rid of HIV. Once you get HIV, it stays in your body.

## HIV stands for:

<b>Human</b>	Only people get it.
<b>Immunodeficiency</b>	It damages your immune system which is what keeps your body well.
<b>Virus</b>	It is a virus (germ).



## What is AIDS?

HIV is not AIDS. If people have HIV and do not get treatment, their immune system will become so weak that they will get unusual illnesses. When HIV has gone this far, doctors call it AIDS.

AIDS is very serious. In fact, people with AIDS are more likely to get diseases that can kill them.

Taking treatment can stop you getting AIDS.

### AIDS stands for:

<b>Acquired</b>	You can only get HIV from someone who already has it.
<b>Immune</b>	It affects your immune system, which fights off germs.
<b>Deficiency</b>	Your immune system stops working properly.
<b>Syndrome</b>	People get sick from it in different ways.

## Taz's Yarn

*As a Brotherboy I see there is a huge amount of stigma and misunderstanding of the needs of Brotherboys and a need for culturally safe and affirming testing sites and other service centres. It is important that assumptions are not made about our different sexualities and the services that we require, and that clinicians and health workers are appropriately trained to better meet the needs of our communities. As Brotherboys it is important not only that we remain educated about safe practices in all aspects whether it is sex, taking substances or even tattooing or piercing, but also to reach out to services where we feel safe for HIV testing and our other needs so that we have better health outcomes for the community.*

## What happens when HIV gets into your body?

There is often no sign (symptoms) that you have HIV, and many people with HIV feel well for years.

But HIV slowly hurts the immune system so it cannot protect you from germs. You can also pass on HIV to others more easily during this time because there is a lot of HIV in your body.

**If you do not take treatments, after a while you will begin to get very sick. You may also get sick from illnesses your body would normally fight off. Treatments can help you stay strong and stop HIV making you sick. Taking HIV treatments properly also means you can reduce the amount of HIV in your body so you cannot pass it on to other people through sex.**

## How do you get HIV?

Anyone can get HIV. HIV is passed on through contact with:

- blood
- semen (cum)
- pre-cum
- vaginal fluids
- rectal (anal) fluids
- breast milk

HIV can be passed on from:

- Vaginal and anal sex without condoms
- Sharing needles and other injecting equipment
- Mother to baby, through pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding.

It is not likely but occasionally it can also get passed on by:

- Sharing razors and other cutting, piercing or tattooing equipment
- Getting body fluids that can pass on HIV in cuts or in your mouth. This includes a person bleeding from accidents or during fights.

You cannot get HIV from things like:

- saliva
- kissing and hugging
- sharing cups or forks
- toilet seats or towels
- mosquitoes
- sweat

## How can I make sure I do not get HIV or pass it on?



### Use condoms and lube for sex.

Using lube can stop condoms from breaking and can feel good.



**Take PEP.** If you forget to use a condom or it breaks, or if you share injecting equipment, have no shame, and get PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis).



You take PEP medications for 1 month to prevent HIV after a risk. PEP needs to be started within 72 hours after a risk, but it is better if you can start within 24 hours. You can get PEP from Emergency Departments of most public hospitals or at sexual health clinics and some other doctors. For more information or visit [www.getpep.info](http://www.getpep.info)



**Take treatment for HIV.** If you have HIV, taking treatment keeps you well. It can also reduce the amount of HIV in your body to an undetectable level (so low that tests cannot find it). That means you cannot pass HIV on to someone else. This is called 'Treatment as Prevention'. This is also known as 'Undetectable = Untransmittable' or 'U=U'.



**Take PrEP.** PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. It is a medication that HIV-negative people can take to prevent HIV.

Taking PrEP before being exposed to HIV means there is enough medicine in your system to stop HIV if it gets into your body.

PrEP protects you from HIV, but it does not prevent other STIs, or pregnancy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can get treatment for HIV and PrEP at reduced cost or for free under the 'Closing the Gap' scheme.

Talk to your doctor.



**Use new gear** (needle, syringe, and other injecting equipment) every time if you inject drugs. Used syringes contain small amounts of blood. Even a small amount of blood can carry germs or disease.

Make sure you return your used needles and syringes to a Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) or throw them away safely inside something hard, like a plastic bottle with a lid, so other people do not get hurt by them.



**Cover up cuts,** and if you have to clean up blood, wear gloves (or use plastic bags if you do not have gloves).



**Do NOT share anything** that could have had blood on it including knives, razor blades or needles.



**If you are pregnant**, talk to your doctor or health worker about what you need to do. Women with HIV can have healthy babies without HIV.

**HIV can have a big impact on our community and culture.**






**Sometimes people take more risks when they are away from home. Whether you are at home or away for some fun, keep yourself safe!**

## Getting tested



### How do I know if I have HIV?

#### You may have HIV but not know it.

-  Some people do not get sick at all when they first get HIV.
-  A lot of people do feel a bit sick when they first get HIV but do not realise it is because of HIV.
-  It feels a bit like having a bad cold or flu, so that is what people can think they have.
-  After the first couple of weeks, many people do not have any illness from HIV for months or years.
-  You may have HIV even if you currently feel well. It is important to get tested before your immune system is too damaged.





**The only way to know whether you have HIV is to have an HIV test.**

If you are worried because you have been having unprotected sex or sharing needles, talk to your doctor or health worker about having a HIV test. Let them know if you have had a recent illness that felt like a bad cold or flu.

You can find out where your local sexual health clinic and Aboriginal Medical Service is on the Better to Know website at [www.bettertoknow.org.au](http://www.bettertoknow.org.au)



**The 715 Health Check is an annual health check for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**

**It is free at Aboriginal Medical Services and bulk billing GP clinics. Yarn to your doctor about including tests for HIV and other STIs in your 715 Health Check.**

## Jayden's Yarn

*As a gay man HIV has always been something that scared me and sometimes cause anxiety when having sex. I was always sure I used a condom which eased my anxiety during sex. Although one time a condom broke and I did not know at the time but thankfully I was able to get PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis). I was lucky that I was able to get PEP within the time after the potential risk to be protected. After my treatment I spoke to my doctor about PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) and we both decided it was a good idea I start taking PrEP so I can now feel less anxiety and more confidence when having sex knowing I am protected.*

## Your HIV test is your business

Before you get tested you should think carefully about who you want to tell about your plans. It can be good to tell someone you trust so they can give you support. But if you want to keep your business private, think about who you can trust.

Getting tested for HIV is your own private business. Only your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Worker needs to know. They are not allowed to tell anyone about your HIV test results unless you say they can. They are not even allowed to tell anyone whether you have had a HIV test.




If you are worried about seeing someone at your local health centre, you could think about seeing a different clinic, or someone in another town or area.

### Get tested for HIV! ?





And while you're there, ask for tests for other illnesses that can be passed through blood and sex.

## Everything about your HIV test is private:

-  You have the right to yarn with a counsellor before and after the test. Those conversations are private.
-  Your blood samples at the laboratory have numbers (a code) not names on them.
-  Your results are private business.

## Getting the results

Only your doctor or health care worker can tell you your HIV test results.

-  If your HIV test result is positive, it means you have HIV.
-  If your test result is negative, it means HIV has not shown up in your blood. That could be because you do not have HIV, but it could mean you are in 'the window period'.

The **window period** means HIV might be in your blood, but it is too early to show up in a test. It usually shows up in a few weeks after a risk for HIV but can take up to 6 to 12 weeks. If you have had a test in the window period, you will need to have another test after the window period to double check the results. These results will be accurate if you do not have unprotected sex or share needles in the window period.

Your doctor or health care worker can explain a negative test result and help work out exactly what it means.

## Getting tested for other illnesses

**STIs** Having sex means you could also have other STIs (sexually transmissible infections). Condoms can help protect you from most STIs, but you can still get some STIs even when you use condoms. They can make you really sick and damage your body if you do not get treatment.

If you have an STI, it is easier to get or pass on HIV. You should ask for an STI test at the same time as your HIV test.

There are very high rates of some STIs in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Getting an STI test is a step to improving the health of our communities.

**Hepatitis** Sharing needles and syringes can spread HIV but also infections like hepatitis B or hepatitis C. If you have been sharing needles, syringes, or other injecting equipment tell your doctor and get tested for hepatitis B and C at the same time as your HIV test.

**Lots of STIs have no symptoms. Have regular sexual health checks. And make sure you use condoms and lube. You can talk to your doctor if you are worried about anything.**



## I have HIV – What now?



Having HIV is serious, but it is not the end of the world.

If you do nothing, HIV will lead to illnesses that can kill you. But there are treatments you can take to control HIV so you can be well. You will also need to look after yourself and make sure you have people around to support you.

If you have just found out that you are HIV positive, you will need to think about:

- ✱ Who you want or need to tell
- ✱ Getting support from family and friends
- ✱ Getting help from local health services
- ✱ Choosing an HIV specialist doctor who is right for you
- ✱ Starting HIV treatment (medicines)



## Working out who else might need an HIV test

Your doctor or health care worker might ask you for the names of people you have had sex with or who you have shared needles with. If they think those people might also have HIV, they will contact them and ask them to come in for an HIV test. This is not about blaming you.

It is to make sure everyone who might have HIV gets a test.

If the health care worker talks to your previous partners, they will **NOT** tell them your name.





## Telling sexual partners

It can be really hard to tell someone you have HIV. Your health care worker, counsellor or peer worker can help you

work out who you want to tell, what you might want to say, and where and how to say it. There are also services in the back of the booklet that can help.

In some parts of Australia, the law says you must tell your partner you have HIV before you have sex or share injecting equipment.

## You and your community

You need to look after yourself - your body and spirit.

HIV is an important issue facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Our communities have high rates of STIs (sexually transmissible infections) and HIV rates have been increasing.

There is no shame having HIV, we all belong and are a part of our community. We all have a big role to play looking after family, community, and culture.

# Treatments



## Taking treatments (medicines)

Treatments for HIV are called **'antiretroviral therapy'**.

It cannot get rid of HIV, but it reduces the amount of HIV in your body and keeps your immune system strong. Treatments are easier to take than before. They keep people with HIV healthier, so they live as long as everyone else.

If you have Medicare, you can get HIV treatments from a local chemist at a set cost and is cheaper if you have a concession card. In some states in Australia, these costs are waived, and treatment is free.

As part of the 'Closing the Gap' scheme, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can pay a reduced price, and if you already have a concession card you can get it for free. Talk to your doctor about the 'Closing the Gap' scheme.

If you do not have a Medicare card, there are other options for you to access treatments, so speak to your doctor.

If you are worried about cost, talk to your doctor, Aboriginal Health Worker or the organisations listed in the back of this booklet.

Some people need to take a few different treatments, but many people take just one pill each day. Your doctor will talk to you about which treatment might be best for you.



It is important to take your treatment the way the doctor tells you or it may not work! This means remembering to take it every day and at the same time every day.







## When to start treatment

The earlier someone starts treatment after they are diagnosed, the better this will be for their health. It stops HIV from doing more damage. It is often recommended to start treatment straight after being diagnosed.

Once you start treatment, you will need to take them for the rest of your life. Talk to your doctor about when you are ready to start.

There are a few things to think about.

## HIV treatment:

-  reduces the amount of HIV in your body. This will make you feel better and prevent you from getting sick.
-  can reduce the amount of HIV in your body to an undetectable level. That means you cannot pass HIV on to someone else.
-  does not cause side effects (feeling sick) for most people. Some people still get side effects, but they are usually not so bad and do not last for long.
-  is something you take for the rest of your life. Once you start treatment, you should keep taking it. If you miss a tablet or two a week HIV can become 'resistant' to treatment – meaning the HIV treatments will not work properly. You will need to change to another treatment.
-  Your doctor or health worker should have some suggestions about how to take your treatment every day.
-  Talk with your doctor. Do not be afraid to ask questions. It is recommended for people with HIV to start treatment as soon as possible after they find out they have HIV to make sure they stay healthy.



## **HIV positive women who are pregnant should start treatment early.**

This will help keep the baby safe from HIV. If you have HIV and are planning to get pregnant, see your doctor. There are a number of things you can do to protect your baby from HIV, including taking treatments. Pregnant women who take HIV treatment regularly almost always have babies that do not have HIV. Your actions will make a big difference to whether or not your baby has HIV.

If you find out you are pregnant, see your doctor as soon as you can!

## **Michelle's Yarn**

*As a woman being diagnosed with HIV in the early 90's then having a baby, and not knowing if I passed on the virus was scary, luckily she was ok. Many things have changed since the 90's, such as new medication, taking PrEP which can prevent HIV or using condoms. If you get tested for HIV and the result is that you are now HIV Positive, you can start medication straight away so that you can now live a long life. Taking your HIV medication every day stops you from passing it on. Life does not stop if your test comes back HIV positive, you can still work, you can still play sport, Women can still have babies and we can drink from the same cup. It is important to talk to your doctor if you have other health conditions that might cause problems with your HIV medication. Yarning with Mob who are living with HIV can help you get through the tough times, so you are not alone.*

## Regular check-ups

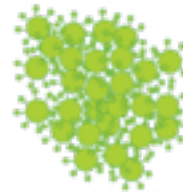
If you have HIV, it is important to keep checking your health. You should visit your doctor every few months to check how much HIV is in your blood and whether it is damaging your immune system.

Your doctor will do blood tests to check how much HIV you have in your blood and whether it is damaging your immune system. Everyone is different, so it is important to talk to your doctor about exactly what these tests mean for you.

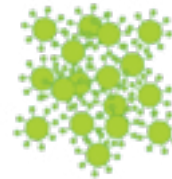
**Checking the virus** – The viral load test shows how much HIV is in your blood. If your viral load is high, there is a big chance of getting sick and HIV can pass to someone else quite easily.

If you go on treatments, your viral load should go way down. Most people will get down to an 'undetectable' level. That means you still have HIV but there is so little it does not show up in the tests. This will keep you well and means you cannot pass on HIV.

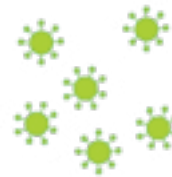
## What your viral load means



**High viral load** – There is a lot of HIV in your blood. This can do a lot of damage, make you sick and makes it easier to pass HIV on to someone else.



**Low viral load** – HIV is being controlled and does not have much power to make you sick. It is not as easy to pass on HIV.



**Undetectable viral load** – You still have HIV, but it does not show in tests. This keeps you well and means you cannot pass on HIV to your partners.



## Checking your immune system

CD4 cell count tests show how strong your immune system is. CD4 cells fight germs, so HIV tries to get rid of them. If your CD4 count is low, you are more likely to get sick. When you go on treatments, your CD4 count should go way up, which will stop you from getting sick.

### What your CD4 cell count test can tell you



**Less than 350** – Your immune system is very weak.



**350 to 500** – Your immune system appears weak.



**More than 500** – Your immune system is strong.

## Kirra's Yarn

*I first became more conscious of sexual health when I first started taking PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) before I started my transition as a Sistergirl (Aboriginal Transgender woman) three years ago. Once I became more sexually active, I also learnt more about sexual health and particularly the importance for Mob to also be conscious of sexual health as a high-risk community. STIs and HIV is still a leading concern in rural and remote communities, and we must stand together against the spread of HIV.*

*Historically PrEP was targeted at gay men or men who have sex with men, however as a Sistergirl on PrEP I know I have taken the right steps to protect myself from HIV regardless of my gender and sexual life. I encourage my Trans, Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities to be active in protecting themselves against HIV and STIs and spreading the awareness of sexual health within their communities. Sexual health does not have to be shame, we all do it and it is better that we are protecting ourselves and protecting others by spreading the word.*

## Care and support



Having HIV can feel like riding a roller coaster, with lots of 'ups' and 'downs'. The good news is that people with HIV are getting on well in their lives - working, studying, in relationships, having children, looking after their families, and doing all kinds of things they enjoy.

You will probably need support, particularly in the early days. It can be good to have a yarn, but it is important to find the right balance - to get support but make sure you do not have regrets about who you have told. You need to feel safe.

It is up to you who you tell. Care and support can come from different places including family, friends, and health care workers.

Sometimes it is useful to talk to other people with HIV because they may have had similar experiences and they will have some idea what you are going through.

You might also want to talk to a counsellor. Remember, counsellors are not just for people who are desperate. They can help you work out everyday stuff, help you sort out your feelings, and help you make plans to improve things.

There are services in the back of the booklet that can tell you about support services near you.

**You are not alone!** There are thousands of people in Australia living with HIV, and many, many more who care about them.

If you have HIV, it is important to keep checking your health. You should visit your doctor every few months to check how much HIV is in your blood and whether it is damaging your immune system.

You will also need to keep checking your health in other ways, like looking after your teeth, eyes, heart, bones, and liver. Your doctor or health worker will help you check these things and anything else that is important.

## What can I do if someone I know has HIV?



### It is important not to listen to rumours or gossip.

Be careful what you say and do and think how you would like people to be if you had HIV.

People with HIV need to make their own decisions and live their own lives but there are some things you can do to help:



**Find out** about HIV so you can help them and also stay safe.



**Ask** the person with HIV how they would like you to help (support) them.



**Be there**, hug them and show that you care.



**Help** them eat the right foods and take their treatment when and how the doctor tells them.



**Respect** their business (privacy). It is up to each person with HIV who they tell.



**Talk** to other people in your community about HIV so they can be supportive, stay safe and not worry about getting HIV.



**We all have a job to stop the shame around HIV and STIs.**



## Services that can help



This section tells you about the types of services that are available and how to contact them.

**1800 telephone numbers are free when dialed from any Australian phone line including mobile.**

Some advice HIV and AIDS organisations have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project officers who can help.

### AIDS Councils

Most states and territories have an AIDS Council, and some have offices in regional towns. AIDS Councils can tell you more about HIV as well as the best places to get help. Some of the bigger AIDS Councils offer their own support services.



### PLHIV organisations and Positive Living Centres

PLHIV stands for People Living with HIV. There are PLHIV organisations in most states and territories.

They provide a safe place for people with HIV to get together, as well as confidential (private) support, advice, and referral to services.

In some states, PLHIV services also have Positive Living Centres, which offer support services like free/cheap meals, vitamin supplements and counselling.

### Needle and Syringe Program (NSPs)

If you inject drugs, you can get new gear (needles, syringes, other injecting equipment) and helpful information from Needle and Syringe Programs (NSPs). You can ask the AIDS Council or your health worker where to find one near you.





## Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

Aboriginal Medical Services (AMSs) provide confidential testing for HIV and other STI's (sexually transmissible infections), as well as general health care, counselling, and support. Some can provide HIV treatments.

There are more than 190 AMSs in Australia. The following state and territory organisations can tell you where your nearest AMS is located:

### Australian Capital Territory



Winnunga Nimmityjah  
Aboriginal Health and  
Community Services  
(WNAHCS)  
02 6284 6222  
[www.winnunga.org.au](http://www.winnunga.org.au)

### New South Wales



Aboriginal Health & Medical  
Research Council of NSW  
(AH&MRC)  
02 9212 4777  
[www.ahmrc.org.au](http://www.ahmrc.org.au)

### Northern Territory

#### AMSANT

Aboriginal Medical Services  
Alliance Northern Territory  
(AMSANT)  
08 8944 6666  
[www.amsant.org.au](http://www.amsant.org.au)

### Queensland



Queensland Aboriginal &  
Islander Health Council  
(QAIHC)  
07 3328 8500  
[www.qaihc.com.au](http://www.qaihc.com.au)

### South Australia



Aboriginal Health Council of  
South Australia (AHCSA)  
08 8273 7200  
[www.ahcsa.org.au](http://www.ahcsa.org.au)

### Tasmania



Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre  
03 6234 0700  
1800 132 260  
[www.tacinc.com.au](http://www.tacinc.com.au)

## Victoria



Victorian Aboriginal  
Community Controlled Health  
Organisation (VACCHO)  
03 9411 9411  
[www.vaccho.org.au](http://www.vaccho.org.au)

## Western Australia



Aboriginal Health Council  
of WA (AHCWA)  
08 9227 1631  
[www.ahcwa.org.au](http://www.ahcwa.org.au)

## HIV Services

### Australian Capital Territory



Meridian  
02 6257 2855  
[www.meridianact.org.au](http://www.meridianact.org.au)

## New South Wales



ACON  
Sydney – 02 9206 2000  
Hunter office – 02 4962 7700  
Coffs Harbour – 02 6651 6017  
Northern Rivers – 02 6622 1555  
1800 063 060  
[www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)



Positive Life NSW  
02 9206 2177  
1800 245 677  
[www.positivelife.org.au](http://www.positivelife.org.au)

Bobby Goldsmith  
Foundation

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation  
(BGF)  
02 9283 8666  
[www.bgf.org.au](http://www.bgf.org.au)

## Northern Territory



Northern Territory AIDS &  
Hepatitis Council (NTAHC)  
08 8944 7777  
[www.ntahc.org.au](http://www.ntahc.org.au)  
Alice Springs  
08 8953 3172

## Queensland



Queensland Council for  
LGBTI Health  
Brisbane – 07 3017 1777  
1800 177 434 (freecall outside  
Brisbane only)  
Cairns – 07 4041 5451  
1800 884 401  
[www.quac.org.au](http://www.quac.org.au)



Queensland Positive People  
(QPP)  
07 3013 5555  
1800 636 241  
[www.qpp.org.au](http://www.qpp.org.au)



**Tasmania**  
Tasmanian Council on AIDS,  
Hepatitis & Related Diseases  
(TasCAHRD)  
03 6234 1242  
1800 005 900  
[www.redthread.org.au](http://www.redthread.org.au)

## Victoria



Thorne Harbour Health  
03 9865 6700  
[www.thorneharbour.org](http://www.thorneharbour.org)



Living Positive Victoria  
03 9863 8733  
[www.livingpositivevictoria.org.au](http://www.livingpositivevictoria.org.au)



## Western Australia

WA AIDS Council (WAAC)  
08 9482 0000  
[www.waaims.com](http://www.waaims.com)

## National Organisations



Australian Federation of AIDS  
Organisations (AFAO)  
02 9557 9399  
[www.afao.org.au](http://www.afao.org.au)



National Association of People  
with HIV Australia (NAPWA)  
02 8568 0300  
1800 259 666  
[www.napwha.org.au](http://www.napwha.org.au)



Positive Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Network  
(PATSIN)  
1800 259 666  
[www.napwha.org.au/about-us/patsin/](http://www.napwha.org.au/about-us/patsin/)



Australian Injecting & Illicit  
Drug Users League (AIVL)  
02 6279 1600  
[www.aivl.org.au](http://www.aivl.org.au)



Scarlet Alliance, Australian  
Sex Workers Association  
02 9517 2577  
[www.scarletalliance.org](http://www.scarletalliance.org)

# Glossary

## **AIDS**

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome – HIV will become AIDS if it is not treated. AIDS can kill you.

## **Antibodies**

Antibodies are made by the immune system to fight germs

## **Antiretroviral therapy**

Medicine that attacks HIV

## **CD4 (T4) cell**

Part of your blood that protects you from illness and that is damaged by HIV.

## **HIV**

Human Immunodeficiency Virus - a germ you can get from sex, sharing needles, and can be passed on from mothers to baby.

## **Immune System**

Your body's way of protecting itself against illness

## **Immunodeficiency**

Your body is not able to protect itself

## **Hep B**

Hepatitis B – a type of liver sickness caused by a germ mainly spread by sex, sharing needles, and mothers to baby.

## **Hep C**

Hepatitis C – a type of liver sickness mainly spread by sharing injecting equipment.

## **NSP**

Needle and Syringe Program – a place where people who inject drugs can get injecting equipment, information and support

## **PEP**

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis – a pill you take everyday for a month very soon after a possible exposure to HIV to prevent HIV.

## **PLHIV**

People Living with HIV

## **PrEP**

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis – a pill that HIV negative people take to prevent HIV.

## **STIs**

Sexually Transmissible Infections – diseases that can be passed on when having sex

## **Treatment as prevention**

When a person with HIV takes treatment and has an 'undetectable viral load', they cannot pass on HIV.

## **Undetectable viral load**

When a person with HIV takes treatment and the amount of HIV in their blood is so small, it doesn't show up in the tests.

## **Viral load**

How much HIV is in your blood

## **Virus**

A small organism (germ) often causing illness

## **Window period**

How long it takes for HIV to show up in a test – usually 6 to 12 weeks after it enters your body





**afao**

[www.usmobandhiv.org.au](http://www.usmobandhiv.org.au)