

## How do I get tested?

It is always good practice to get tested after you have had unprotected sex or shared injecting equipment.

You can get tested for HIV for free at your sexual health clinic.

Turning Point can also offer free and confidential testing for HIV via a quick and easy dry blood spot test.

## Treatment for HIV

HIV treatment involves taking anti-HIV drugs every day. These drugs do not cure HIV, but they can stop HIV from reproducing. This allows the immune system to strengthen and fight infections effectively. Treatment may reduce the viral load (the amount of virus in the blood) to the extent that it can't be detected and therefore can't be passed on.

U=U Undetectable = Untransmittable

If you would like to know more about HIV, follow these links:

<https://www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual-health/about-hiv>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hiv-and-aids>

## Advice and support

Terence Higgins Trust free helpline: 0808 802 1221

Online group for gay and bisexual men who engage in chemsex:

<https://www.tht.org.uk/our-services/support-services/lets-talk-about-chemsex>

SASH - London Friend

<https://londonfriend.org.uk/sash/>

George House Trust 0161 274 4499

<https://ght.org.uk/>

## Other blood borne viruses (BBVs)

Hepatitis B and C are viruses which are transmitted in a similar way to HIV. They infect the liver cells and can cause a range of liver diseases. In some cases the person will not have any symptoms or look ill.

Hep B is not curable but the condition can be managed with medication. Often the body can fight and clear the infection. There is also an effective vaccine available.

For Hep C there is no vaccine but treatment is available which successfully clears the infection in 9 out of 10 people.

Turning Point offer confidential and free testing for both Hep B and C, as well as the vaccine for Hep B. We can also refer for Hep C treatment.

For more information follow these links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-b/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-c/>

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# HIV Information for People we Support





## How is HIV transmitted?

- Through unprotected anal, vaginal and oral sex.
- By sharing syringes, needles and other things used to inject drugs.
- From a mother to her baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.
- By blood coming into contact with broken skin

## You cannot get HIV from:

- Hugging or kissing
- Coughing or sneezing
- Cutlery
- Toilets
- Shaking hands
- Food

## Keeping yourself safe

- Know your HIV status - get tested
- Use condoms every time you have sex
- Consider taking HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
- Do not share needles or any other injecting equipment - sterile equipment is available from drug services such as Turning Point as well as some pharmacies
- Do not share snorting equipment or sex toys

## What are PrEP and PEP?

PrEP (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis) is a drug taken by HIV-negative people before and after sex that reduces the risk of getting HIV. PrEP can be an option if you choose to have unprotected sex and is an extra level of protection for anyone who is sexually active. It has also been proven to reduce risk of infection in people who inject drugs. You can access PrEP for free at your sexual health clinic.

PEP stands for Post Exposure Prophylaxis. It is a drug that can stop an HIV infection if the virus has only just entered a person's body. It must be taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex or contact with potentially infected blood. It is available for free from NHS sexual health clinics and A&E.

## What is HIV?

HIV is a virus which is passed from person to person through blood, semen, vaginal fluid and breastmilk. It can affect anyone, no matter what their sexuality is.

It attacks the immune system which is responsible for defending us against illnesses.

With treatment a person with HIV can normally lead a healthy life and medication may reduce the viral load to the extent they cannot pass the virus on.

## HIV and AIDS are not the same thing

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is a collection of illnesses caused when HIV weakens the immune system. This means that you do not test for AIDS, you test for HIV. If left untreated HIV can lead to AIDS, with serious consequences.

