

YOU'RE IN CONTROL.

we're here  
to help.

 **FHCCP**  
Family Health Council of  
Central Pennsylvania, Inc.

CONFIDENCE  
AND CONTROL,  
**you've got both.**

Receiving an HIV diagnosis may leave you feeling many emotions all at once or questioning your past and future. As you navigate your feelings, remember that this new experience isn't the end of your life as you once knew it. You're still you.

Now is the time to  
**take control of your body.**

**TakeControlHIV.com**

## FAQs

**WE'RE HERE TO  
HELP YOU LIVE  
YOUR BEST LIFE.**

### **HIV: What it is and symptoms**

**What exactly is HIV? Is it the same thing as AIDS?** HIV, which is short for Human Immunodeficiency Virus, is a virus that attacks the body's immune system, weakening it over time. This makes it difficult or impossible for the body to fight off infections and some diseases, if left untreated. Sometimes people with HIV can get an opportunistic infection or their CD4 count goes below 200. If either of these things happen, your HIV may be categorized as AIDS. Talk with your medical provider for more information.

**What are some of the symptoms of HIV? When do these symptoms start after exposure?** Many people don't show any symptoms at all; however, some initial HIV symptoms can occur between 2 and 4 weeks after exposure and may include chills, fever, rash, muscle aches, fatigue, sore throat and more. Some say it's like having a case of the flu or a bad cold.

**Is there a cure for HIV?** Although there is no cure for HIV, modern medical treatments are extremely effective at controlling HIV. When taken routinely, treatments help people live long, healthy lives.



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## Treatment and life balance

### Can HIV affect how long I live?

In most cases, HIV can only impact your lifespan if you are not receiving treatment. As long as you take your HIV medications correctly, you can live a long and healthy life.

### What are my options for treatment?

Antiretroviral therapy, a.k.a. ART, is a combination of medication that your medical provider will give you. It can greatly reduce the level of HIV in your blood. ART may come in the form of one pill or several to be taken together.

### When should I start treatment?

You should begin treatment as soon as possible after receiving an HIV diagnosis. Delaying treatment may cause you to become seriously ill with infections that your body is unable to fight off on its own.

### **How often do I need treatment?**

Your healthcare provider will prescribe your treatment as a medication to take on a daily basis.

**Do I need treatment even if I'm feeling OK?** Yes, even if you aren't experiencing active symptoms of HIV after receiving your diagnosis, you need to keep up with your treatment plan.

### **Can I skip my treatments? What should I do if I miss a treatment?**

Missing or skipping your HIV treatment allows HIV the opportunity to multiply and weaken your immune system. This increases your chances of becoming sick. If you forget to take a dose or miss several doses, consult with your healthcare provider or pharmacist immediately to determine the best course of action.

**Do I need to tell my employer about my HIV?** You aren't required to disclose having HIV to your employer. You are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prevents any employer from discriminating against your HIV status.



## Work and relationships

**How is HIV spread?** HIV is spread through semen, vaginal fluid, blood and breast milk. Most commonly, people get HIV through unprotected sex or sharing needles. HIV can't be transmitted via air, water, saliva, sweat, tears, insects, pets, or sharing toilets, food or drinks.





**Does living with HIV mean I can't have sex anymore?** You can still enjoy a fulfilling sex life with HIV by taking extra steps to practice safe sex. This begins with taking your treatment as prescribed by your healthcare provider, as doing so can lower the levels of HIV in your blood and bodily fluids, which reduces the risks of transmission to a sexual partner. Using condoms and dental dams are also best practices to follow every time you have sex.

Have a question we didn't answer? **Ask your own at**

**TakeControlHIV.com**

## My next appointment

WHEN

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WHERE

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## My next appointment

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## My next appointment

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## My next appointment

WHEN

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## My CD4 count

DATE

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CELLS/mm<sup>3</sup>

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DATE

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CELLS/mm<sup>3</sup>

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DATE

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CELLS/mm<sup>3</sup>

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DATE

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CELLS/mm<sup>3</sup>

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## My viral load

DATE

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COPIES/mL

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DATE

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COPIES/mL

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DATE

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COPIES/mL

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DATE

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COPIES/mL

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LIVE LIFE TO  
THE FULLEST.  
**live life like you.**





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YOU DESERVE  
**a healthy life.**

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**LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL**  
**and so are you.**



LIVE AT YOUR BEST,  
**love at your best.**



IN OFFICE OR  
AT HOME,

**we're here for  
you, anytime.**

If you are struggling to  
cope with HIV, have  
unanswered questions  
or need emotional  
support, call the  
Pennsylvania  
HIV/AIDS Hotline at  
**(800) 662-6080**  
or visit

**TakeControlHIV.com**



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