



# What to Know About HIV and COVID-19

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People with HIV may have concerns and questions related to their risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, and CDC will provide updated information as it becomes available.

### Are people with HIV at higher risk for COVID-19 than other people?

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We are still learning about COVID-19 and how it affects people with HIV. Based on limited data, we believe people with HIV who are on effective HIV treatment have the same risk for COVID-19 as people who do not have HIV.

**Older adults** and **people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions** might be at **increased risk** for severe illness. This includes people who have weakened immune systems. The risk for people with HIV getting very sick is greatest in

- People with a low CD4 cell count, and
- People not on effective HIV treatment (antiretroviral therapy or ART).

### What can people with HIV do to protect themselves from COVID-19?

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There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent getting sick is to avoid exposure to the virus.

People with HIV should take **everyday preventive actions** to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

If you have HIV and are taking your HIV medicine, it is important to continue your treatment and follow the advice of your health care provider. This is the best way to keep your immune system healthy.

People with HIV should also continue to maintain a healthy lifestyle by

- Eating right,
- Getting at least 8 hours of sleep, and
- **Reducing stress as much as possible.**

Staying healthy helps your immune system fight off infection should it occur.

## What should I do if I think I might have COVID-19?



Call your health care provider if you develop [symptoms](#) that could be consistent with COVID-19.

Most people have mild illness and can recover at home. If you think you have COVID-19 and have symptoms of illness, you should [get tested](#).

It's important to continue taking your HIV medicine as prescribed. This will help keep your immune system healthy.

If you experience severe symptoms, get emergency medical care immediately. Call ahead and tell the operator that you may have COVID-19.

Learn more about COVID-19 and [what to do if you get sick](#).

## What else can people with HIV who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 do to protect themselves?



Nearly half of people in the United States with diagnosed HIV are aged 50 years and older. People with HIV also have higher rates of certain underlying health conditions. Older age and these conditions can [increase their risk](#) for more severe illness if people with HIV get COVID-19, especially people with advanced HIV.

Steps that people with HIV can take to [prepare](#) in addition to what is recommended for everybody:

- Make sure you have at least a 30- to 90-day supply of your HIV medicine and any other medications or medical supplies you need for managing HIV. Ask your health care provider about receiving your medicine by mail.
- Talk to your health care provider and make sure all your vaccinations are up-to-date, including [vaccinations against seasonal influenza \(flu\)](#) and bacterial pneumonia. These vaccine-preventable diseases disproportionately affect people with HIV.
- Establish and maintain a plan for remote clinical care. Try to establish a telemedicine link through your HIV care provider's online portal. If telemedicine is not available to you, make sure you can communicate with your provider by phone or text. You can update your remote clinical care plan every year, or any time you have a change in your health or HIV treatment.
- If your HIV is undetectable (or virally suppressed), talk to your health care provider about delaying your routine medical and lab visits.
- If your health care provider changed your HIV treatment, ask if it's safe to delay the change until follow-up testing and monitoring are possible.
- Make sure you can maintain a social network remotely, such as online, by phone, or by video chat. This can help you stay socially connected and mentally healthy, which is especially important for people with HIV.
- People with HIV can sometimes be more likely than others to need extra help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, and others. If you become sick, make sure you stay in touch by phone or email with people who can help you.

## Can HIV medicine (ART) be used to treat COVID-19?



Currently, treatment for COVID-19 is very limited. There is no evidence that any medicines used to treat HIV are effective against COVID-19. People with HIV should not switch their HIV medicine in an attempt to prevent or treat COVID-19.

Some clinical trials are looking at whether HIV medicines can treat COVID-19. Other trials are looking at the effectiveness of different drugs to treat COVID-19 in people with HIV and better understand how people with HIV manage COVID-19. You can learn more at [ClinicalTrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov) .

## Are shortages of HIV medicine (ART) or pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) expected?



Drug shortages or anticipated problems with HIV medicine have not been identified.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is closely monitoring the drug supply chain as the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to disrupt the supply of medical and pharmaceutical products in the United States.

The National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) has also remained in contact with the major manufacturers of HIV medicine as many of these products rely on ingredients produced in other countries.

As of July 7, 2020, there were no reports of manufacturing concerns or supply shortages of ART or PrEP.

Learn more about [the FDA's response to COVID-19](#) .

## Should people with HIV travel at this time?



For the latest CDC travel recommendations, visit [CDC's COVID-19 travel information page](#).

## What can everyone do to minimize stigma about COVID-19?



Minimizing stigma and misinformation about COVID-19 is very important. People with HIV have experience in dealing with stigma and can be allies in preventing COVID-19 stigma. Learn how you can [reduce stigma and help prevent the spread of rumors](#) about COVID-19.

## More Information

[Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

[Interim Guidance for COVID-19 and Persons with HIV](#) 

[Information for Health Care Professionals](#)

[CDC HIV](#)

[Information for Clinicians on Therapeutic Options for COVID-19 Patients](#)

[CDC HIV Nexus Clinician Resources](#)

[WHO, Coronavirus](#) 

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