

HIV-positive

Diagnosed
with HIV?
What you
need to know

The initial phase	3
HIV-positive!!?	4
Who can I turn to?	5
Who should I tell?	7
How contagious am I?	8
What is HIV?	10
HIV-positive: what exactly does that mean?	11
Infection with HIV	12
Treatment for HIV	14
Medical treatment: the most important points	15
Advantages of treatment	19
Therapy now or later?	21
My HIV doctor	24
Finding the right doctor	25
The next appointment	26
Everyday life with HIV	29
Staying in good health	30
Travelling	32
Sexuality: what now?	33
Data protection, work and insurance	36
Data protection and confidentiality	37
What about at work?	38
My insurance policies	39
How to stand up for your rights?	41
Addresses and further information	43

The initial
phase

HIV-POSITIVE!!!?

You've just learned that you are HIV-positive. In many people, the initial reaction to the diagnosis is shock. Nowadays, however, HIV drugs mean that HIV has become one of the treatable chronic diseases. Many HIV-positive people who are in treatment have a life expectancy similar to those who don't have HIV. An HIV infection is still incurable, and patients will always have to take medication, but they can now look forward to a long – and good – life with HIV.

Checklist for the first few weeks

There is plenty you can do right after you get your diagnosis to help you come to terms with discovering you're HIV-positive.

The following tips have helped many people like you:

- Take time to digest the news
- Look for an HIV specialist who makes you feel like you're in good hands
- Find out all you can about the HIV infection; www.aids.ch is one good source of information
- Prepare for discussions with your doctor, and write down the questions you want to ask
- Ask for support from your nearest and dearest. Don't be afraid to seek psychological help if that's what you need
- If necessary, take advice about your rights and your insurance situation from a regional AIDS centre, or from the legal advice service at the Swiss AIDS Federation
- Be good to yourself, and take care of your health

WHO CAN I TURN TO?

Your care team

It is very important to find the right doctor.



Only an HIV specialist is able to assess how the HIV infection is likely to progress, and select the right medication at the right time for you.

For your treatment to be as effective as possible, you need to feel that you are in good hands with your doctor. If you aren't comfortable in this regard, don't hesitate to address the problem or to look for a new doctor. Hospital care often includes treatment by a professional caregiver.



If need be, you can also ask advice from a psychologist.

Your regional AIDS centres, your Checkpoint

Whether you need information, advice, financial and moral support, or the address of an HIV specialist, your AIDS centre has the answers.



Checkpoints (www.mycheckpoint.ch) have developed a range of special services tailored to HIV-positive gay men

The www.hiv-pract.ch website is where you'll find a list of more doctors in the greater Zurich area who specialise in HIV.

Other HIV-positive people

Talking to people in the same situation can give you strength and hope. Your local AIDS centre can provide you with individual contacts or tell you when meetings will take place.



**«It really helped to know that
I am not alone, that there are lots of other
people in the same boat.»**

Daniel, 26 years old

Legal advice from the Swiss AIDS Federation

The Swiss AIDS Federation offers legal advice free of charge on topics related to HIV and the law.

All addresses can be found on page 43 onwards.



WHO SHOULD I TELL?

Talking about it

HIV-positive individuals are always asking themselves whether or not to tell other people that they are HIV-positive. It can do you good to confide in someone you trust. That said, there is certainly no guarantee that everyone will be able to deal with this sort of knowledge: some may not be up to it, and may become distant, or tell others without thinking. And while the latter is an infringement of your legal rights (see page 37), once the news has begun to make the rounds it's out of your hands. So it's best to speak only with those you can really trust.



It is also helpful if you are already well informed about HIV yourself. For example, it is easier to allay close friends' and family's fears about illness and death if you can tell them that, today, HIV is a chronic disease that responds well to treatment.

Inform your partner

If you are in a relationship, it is important to inform your partner.



If you find it a daunting task, you can also get your doctor or the staff of an AIDS centre to help you.

HOW CONTAGIOUS AM I?

In contrast to many other viruses, HIV cannot be transmitted in everyday circumstances, which means that you may continue to live life much as you always have.

No risk of transmission

The HIV virus cannot be transmitted

- by a handshake or a hug
- by a cough or a sneeze, or through tears
- by eating from the same plate as others, or drinking from the same glass
- by sharing a toilet or bathroom with another person
- by kissing, stroking or massaging
- by petting
- by doing sport with others
- or by most other everyday activities



«I immediately rang up my two girlfriends and told them they had to come over at once.»

Cathy, 51 years old

Risk of transmission

Although certain situations carry a risk of transmission, taking the appropriate measures can prevent contagion.

Unprotected sex

There are two ways to avoid transmission during sex:

- **Safer sex: Always use a condom for genital sex, whether anal or vaginal; for oral sex, do not allow sperm or blood to enter your mouth, or your partner's.**
- **Effective HIV therapy: Sexual intercourse without a condom is possible if your HIV medication is working as it should. There are still specific conditions, however. For more information see page 19.**

From mother to child

There is a risk of transmission during pregnancy, giving birth, and while breast-feeding. Thanks to medical science, however, transmission is avoidable. Indeed, it is now possible to conceive and give birth «naturally». Ask your doctor for information.

Unsafe drug use

Prevent transmission to others by neither sharing nor passing on your syringes, sharps and gear (spoons, filters, cotton wool, water).



What is HIV?

HIV-POSITIVE – WHAT EXACTLY DOES THAT MEAN?

When you become infected with HIV, the body begins to produce antibodies, custom-made to repel that particular pathogen. Combination HIV tests seek out traces of the virus and antibodies in the blood.

HIV-positive therefore means that a test has identified such traces of the virus and antibodies in the blood.

Has the positive HIV test result been confirmed?

«Confirmed positive» means that the suspicion of HIV raised by an initial test has been confirmed by a second blood sample and at least one additional test.



**If you have only the one positive result,
you must undergo a second test.**

What the test does not tell you

An «HIV-positive» test result does not tell you

- anything about your current health
- whether you have AIDS or are at risk of it
- when you might have been infected with the virus

Further tests are required to find this out.

HIV and the immune system

Since human beings are in daily contact with pathogens, such as bacteria, fungi and viruses, the body has its own immune system. This system protects us from many illnesses, and helps us recover after a lung infection, for example.

A central role in this system is played by special cells known as «helper», or CD4 cells.

A virus cannot replicate on its own. HIV, for instance, uses the immune system's CD4 cells in particular to help it spread. It therefore attacks and destroys the very cells that are so crucial to warding off pathogens.



An infection with HIV weakens the immune system over several years to the point that it can no longer perform its function properly.

HI stands for human immunodeficiency, which means a weakening of the human body's immune system.

HIV infection has three phases

Unless it is treated with medication, an infection with HIV progresses through the following three phases:

1. Primary infection: A few days or weeks after infection with HIV, most HIV-positive people experience a brief flu-like illness. This is known as the primary HIV infection. In this phase, the immune system is not yet prepared for the virus, and **HIV is able to replicate quickly. At this point the infected person is particularly contagious.** The body, however, soon forms specialised cells and antibodies that turn against the virus.

2. Latency: There follows a phase that usually lasts for several years, in which the immune system and the virus are in constant stand-off. The body is forever producing new CD4 cells, which HIV is forever destroying. **The affected person, however, hardly notices anything.** However, during this phase the virus is causing damage to the body, since the CD4 cells are less and less capable of recovery, and are steadily losing their ability to function properly. In addition, the entire organism is constantly on high alert, which is a great strain on the body.



Treatment with medication can effectively put a halt to this process.

3. AIDS: When the immune system has been significantly weakened, the body is no longer able to defend itself sufficiently against other pathogens, and a range of otherwise rare diseases, such as TB and fungal infections of the mouth and oesophagus, severe pneumonia, or cancer, are able to manifest themselves. These are known as opportunistic illnesses, since they take advantage of the opportunity offered them by the weakening of the body's immune system. Some of these diseases can be fatal. A patient is not said to have AIDS until one of these diseases is present in their body.

HIV is not the same thing as AIDS

AIDS is thus the late phase of an HIV infection that has not been treated successfully.



Being HIV-positive and having AIDS are not the same thing.



«In Africa, HIV-positive people looked like skeletons. That's why I never dreamed I could have it. I was feeling so healthy!»

Ashley, 38 years old

Treatment for HIV

MEDICAL TREATMENT: THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS

Highly effective

Begun at the right time, and taken correctly, HIV therapy can have a striking effect on life expectancy.

The medication currently available hinders the replication of the virus in the cells of the immune system. These drugs can bring the viral load down below the detection threshold, so that the virus can no longer be passed on through sexual contact. However, the medication cannot drive HIV out of the body entirely.

Combination or antiretroviral therapy

At present, treatment for an HIV infection comprises a combination of medications selected from among more than 20 varieties, to be taken once or twice a day. Only a combination of different drugs is sufficiently effective, hence the expression «HIV combination therapy». Others prefer the term «antiretroviral therapy», since the aim is to combat retroviruses. HIV itself is termed a «retrovirus».



Long-term treatment

Combination therapy is long-term treatment, since it is effective only as long as medication is taken regularly. Such therapy is likely to be necessary all your life.



Latest findings advise against taking breaks from your treatment, as it is in such breaks that you are more likely to experience complications.

This means that you must really be prepared to follow your treatment plan, every day, before you even begin therapy.



We recommend reading our «Ready for treatment?» brochure (link on page 44).



«As a physician, I believe the development of combination therapy for HIV is one of the most incredible projects I have ever been involved in.»

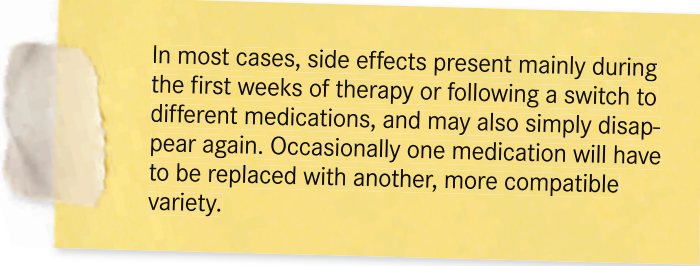
M. P., doctor

Resistance testing

The effectiveness of HIV medication for a given patient depends in part on the resistance of the particular strain of virus involved to certain drugs. As a rule, therefore, the second or confirmation test for HIV is accompanied by a resistance test, which in turn allows for medication to be selected to suit the individual.

Side effects

Recent years have seen combination therapy becoming ever easier on the patient's system. Like other medicines, however, combination therapy often has side effects, such as nausea, diarrhoea and sleep disorders.



In most cases, side effects present mainly during the first weeks of therapy or following a switch to different medications, and may also simply disappear again. Occasionally one medication will have to be replaced with another, more compatible variety.

In some cases, a drug will have to be swapped for a different drug that is better tolerated.

Long-term effects

The current crop of HIV drugs tend to be benign over the long term as well, but certain substances do have long-term effects, including cardiovascular problems and damage to the liver and kidneys.



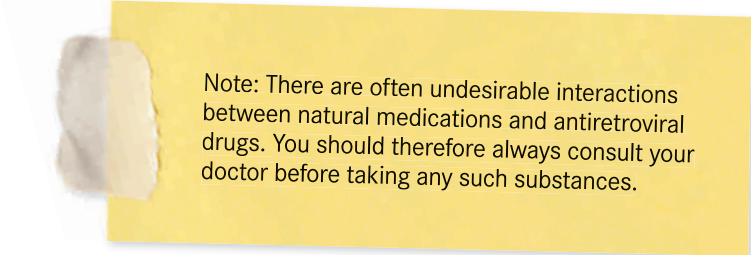
Speak to your doctor about potential side effects and what can be done about them.

Sticking faithfully to therapy is key

Therapy can be effective only if medication is taken regularly as planned. Skipping too many doses may allow HIV to develop its resistance to the drug in question.

Complementary medicine and interactions

Although they may help improve quality of life and alleviate the side effects of HIV therapy, alternative methods of treatment have yet to be proven by scientific studies as effective in combating HIV.



Note: There are often undesirable interactions between natural medications and antiretroviral drugs. You should therefore always consult your doctor before taking any such substances.

Who pays for treatment?

Medical care for an HIV infection costs a lot of money. But you don't have to pay these costs yourself: that's what mandatory health insurance is for. Everyone who lives in Switzerland can – and must – have health insurance. This applies to so-called sans-papiers (undocumented foreigners) as well. You must pay a monthly premium for such basic insurance.



If you have any questions about insurance, you can contact the AIDS centre in your region, or the legal advice service at the Swiss AIDS Federation (for addresses, please see page 45).



**«I get my HIV medication sent
to me at home from an online pharmacy.
It's convenient and discreet.»**

Doris, 39 years old

ADVANTAGES OF TREATMENT

Life expectancy increases significantly

There are two reasons for this:

- Therapy stops the virus replicating, and the immune system is able to recover and successfully fight infection. AIDS does not manifest itself.
- The body is able to rest again. As long as the HIV infection is untreated, the entire organism remains in a state of high alert as it attempts to fight the infection, which in turn means stress. Therapy puts the brakes on the body's constant hyperactivity.

Once in effective treatment, HIV-positive people are no longer (sexually) contagious

This applies if three conditions are met:

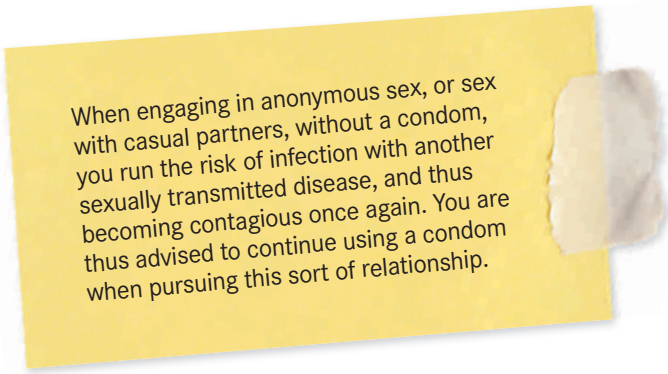
1. Antiretroviral therapy must be strictly adhered to, and its effectiveness regularly monitored by a physician.
2. The bloodstream must have been demonstrably free of viruses for at least six months.
3. There must be no other sexually transmitted infections present, which could lessen the effectiveness of therapy.



What does that mean?

If you are undergoing effective therapy and in a steady relationship, you and your partner may, under certain circumstances, have sex without a condom.

You must, however, consult your doctor first, and include your partner in the decision-making process.



When engaging in anonymous sex, or sex with casual partners, without a condom, you run the risk of infection with another sexually transmitted disease, and thus becoming contagious once again. You are thus advised to continue using a condom when pursuing this sort of relationship.

Reproduction is possible without risk

- As a man: Therapy makes it possible to father a child without infecting your partner.
- As a woman: Therapy makes it possible to conceive and give birth to a child without infecting either your partner or the child.

If you wish to have children, discuss your various options with your doctor before attempting conception.



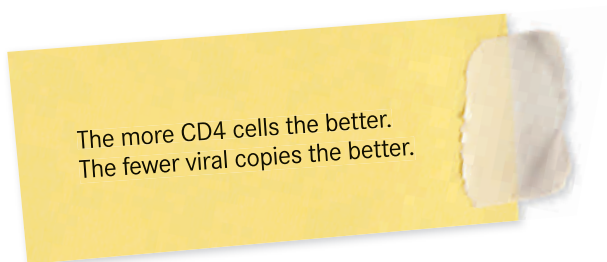
How far has my HIV infection progressed?

In order to choose the best moment to begin therapy, you first need to know what phase (see page 12) your infection has reached.

Two counts provide this information:

1. **Your CD4 cell (or immune cell) count** also known as your CD4 value. A healthy person has some 500 or more CD4 cells per microlitre of blood, a number that decreases over the course of an HIV infection. Without treatment, the number of CD4 cells may approach zero. A low CD4 count indicates that HIV has gained the upper hand in its struggle with your immune system.
2. The **quantity of virus in the blood** also known as your viral load. Without treatment, the quantity of viral copies in the blood plasma can range from a few thousand per millilitre to over a million.

Effective therapy prevents the virus from replicating in the body, so that it is no longer detectable in the blood. This is known as having a viral load below the detection limit.



When should I begin therapy?

There are international guidelines for the appropriate time to begin therapy. Put simply, beginning therapy is generally recommended if:

- your CD4 count falls to 350 (or lower). It may be advisable to begin therapy before this point, so as to relieve your immune system as soon as possible. Studies are currently in progress to test this hypothesis.
- you are ill because of AIDS or any other sickness connected with the progressive weakening of the immune system.

In addition to your test figures, your doctor will also check your current state of health. Under some circumstances, other factors may also play a role in determining when to begin therapy, such as an additional infection with hepatitis B or C.

That said, the most important thing is your willingness to follow your treatment plan faithfully, and – in all probability – continue taking those drugs for life.



What if I'm not ready for therapy?

It is ultimately your decision whether to begin therapy or not – not your doctor's, your partner's or your family's. It's about your health.



**Discuss your concerns and worries with your doctor.
You should also make sure you have all the information
you need to help you make up your mind.**

If you are uncertain, it doesn't hurt to seek a second opinion from another physician. Your regional AIDS centre can also help you make a decision.



**The «Ready for treatment?» brochure can help you make up
your mind. See page 44 for ordering address.**



**«Taking pills every day is no problem.
I've set an alarm on my mobile phone,
and I have a 7-day container which gives me
each day's drug dosage. I only had side effects
in the first few days, but they were bearable.»**

Céline, 28 years old

My HIV
doctor

FINDING THE RIGHT DOCTOR

How do I find an HIV specialist?

Treating an HIV infection requires special expertise. Here's how to find an HIV specialist near you:

- Go to an **HIV treatment centre** for care or to inquire after HIV specialists in your region. You can find the relevant addresses on page 46.
- Go to your **regional AIDS centre** to inquire about GPs who specialise in HIV (addresses on page 45).

Free choice of doctor

As a rule, everyone has the right to select his or her own physician. Make use of this right.



This does not apply if you have selected a health insurance plan of the GP or HMO variety, however, but you may cancel that policy as of the next contractual period if you wish. Seek advice if necessary.

Take advice if you need it.



«It is of paramount importance that a doctor be a good listener, take you seriously, and have enough time for you.»

Ellen, 43 years old

THE NEXT APPOINTMENT

Status assessment

How is your immune system? Is therapy now the right move? Settle these points by seeking out an HIV specialist as soon as possible following diagnosis. The first appointment is key to getting a clear picture of your situation.

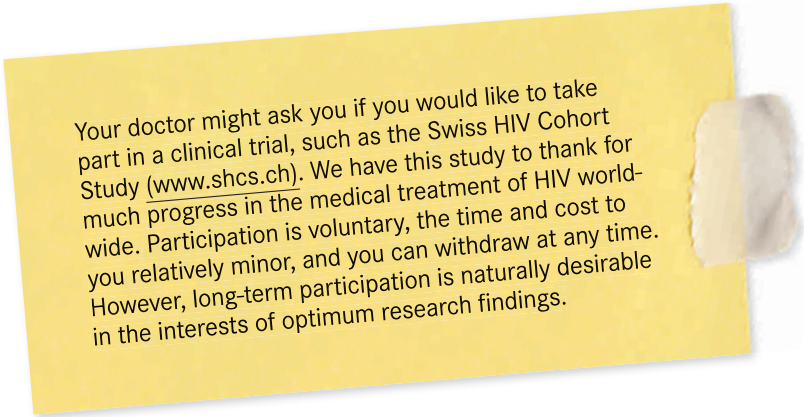
Examinations and tests

At your first appointment following diagnosis, your doctor will perform a detailed examination, and with your help try to reconstruct the history of your infection as accurately as possible. In order to get as comprehensive a picture as possible of your state of health, he or she will typically supplement a CD4 count and assessment of your viral load with resistance tests and tests for possible accompanying diseases like hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections, liver and kidney dysfunction and diseases of the cardiovascular system. If necessary you may also be advised to have additional vaccinations.

Regular visits to the doctor

As a rule, it makes sense to see your doctor or care team roughly every three to six months. If you are in the midst of deciding whether to begin therapy, however, or are having problems with your medication, you might need more frequent consultations.

Taking part in trials



Your doctor might ask you if you would like to take part in a clinical trial, such as the Swiss HIV Cohort Study (www.shcs.ch). We have this study to thank for much progress in the medical treatment of HIV world-wide. Participation is voluntary, the time and cost to you relatively minor, and you can withdraw at any time. However, long-term participation is naturally desirable in the interests of optimum research findings.

What do I want to know?

Don't be afraid to ask about anything you want. You have the right to know:

- what an HIV infection is
- what check-ups are advisable, and why
- what your counts are, and what they mean
- why you are being advised to begin therapy at this particular point, or why therapy is not yet necessary
- what happens if you do not want to begin therapy yet
- how drugs against HIV work
- what side effects are possible
- why you should take a given medication, and when
- the precise risk of engaging in your preferred sexual practices
- how you can protect your long-term partner against infection
- etc.



It might help to note down your questions, and the answers you receive, with keywords.

Talk openly about everything

Try to be open with your doctor and describe your situation just as you experience it. Think of your physician as a medical expert who can give you information and advice.

Not only medical questions are appropriate: talk about everything that concerns you – sexual issues, preventing contagion, quality of life, etc.



**«After all, it's a long-term care relationship.
That is why it is important that doctor
and patient get along well.»**

H. J., doctor

Everyday life
with HIV

How long can I expect to live with HIV?

If you are undergoing effective therapy and lead a healthy lifestyle, you can expect to live for a long time – as long as people who do not have HIV.

Are there particular risks to my health?

Both HIV infection and HIV therapy place a heavy strain on your body. For this reason, you may be more susceptible than people without HIV to:

- heart disease
- diabetes
- liver problems
- damage to your kidneys
- bone fractures
- neurologic disorders
- certain cancers
- other infectious diseases caused by bacteria, viruses and fungi



It is therefore good sense for people living with HIV to pay attention to all aspects of their health.

See below for key recommendations.



«I'm now planning to give up smoking.»

Sabina, 50 years old

How can I have an effect on my health?

While there are some things you cannot change, such as your genetic make-up, there are many other factors over which you do have control.

- **Quit smoking.** Smoking is particularly dangerous for people with HIV, who are already at risk of cancer and cardiovascular illness. Information about kicking the habit is available on 0848 000 181 (Rauchstopplinie or «quitline»).
- **A varied diet** featuring plenty of fruit and vegetables helps your body and your immune system. Extreme diets and specialised regimens, and the nutritional imbalance they involve, often cause more harm than good.
- **Adequate exercise** – sport, dancing, biking, athletics – is good for your heart and improves your circulation. Exercise also helps prevent the blues and promotes general well-being.
- **Moderate consumption of alcohol** is not harmful. Drinking to excess, however, is damaging to your brain and liver and increases your risk of cancer. And if you are also suffering from hepatitis, you should avoid alcohol entirely. If you are having trouble reducing your consumption of alcohol, consult your doctor or seek advice at www.infodrog.ch.
- **Reduce stress, relax.** Studies show that constant stress can make you ill. There are many ways to get stress under control, including yoga, breathing exercises and meditation. Consult the internet to determine which method is right for you.

TRAVELLING

On arrival

Some countries (such as Singapore) continue to impose entry restrictions on people with HIV.



Get information before you travel at www.hivtravel.org.

Drugs and vaccinations

Take along enough medication for the entirety of your trip. If you are travelling to a different time zone, discuss your dosage schedule with your physician. You should also find out what vaccinations are necessary before you leave. You can get more information from your physician.

Health insurance abroad

If you fall ill abroad, your mandatory health insurance coverage will generally assume the cost of treatment for an amount up to twice what you would pay in your home canton, so if you are travelling to an expensive country, such as the US or Japan, you are advised to purchase additional travel health insurance. As a rule, however, such insurance policies do not cover costs arising from a pre-existing condition, such as HIV.

SEXUALITY: WHAT NOW?

Because HIV is sexually transmitted, many people with HIV initially have huge reservations about sex. They have no wish to endanger people by continuing to have sex.

For detailed information see the «Relationship and sexuality» brochure (ordering address page 45).

My partner is HIV-negative

There are two ways to prevent transmission:

- **Safer sex:** Always use a condom for anal and vaginal sex; do not get sperm and/or blood in your mouth when performing oral sex, and do not swallow them if you do.
- **Effective therapy:** If your therapy is working as it should (see page 19) there is virtually no risk of transmission. Under certain circumstances, you may even have sex without a condom. You must, however, consult your doctor first.



«No longer infectious! I can tell my partners about it, and they can stop being afraid that I'm going to infect them with HIV «by accident». Me too: I don't have to worry that I'm going to infect someone.»

Mark, 38 years old

We're both HIV-positive

Consult your doctor before engaging in unprotected sex. Although having sex without a condom carries the risk of infection with a second strain of virus, the risk is not particularly great.

Oops! What now?

If you have unwittingly exposed your partner to a high-risk situation and are not (yet) undergoing effective antiretroviral therapy, your partner can seek PEP therapy (post-exposure prophylaxis), a four-week emergency combination treatment.

In such cases your partner must report to his or her physician or to an emergency care centre as quickly as possible, preferably within the first two hours of risky contact, and within 48 hours at the latest.



Am I committing a criminal offence by having sex?

In principle, every individual is responsible for his or her own safety. The Swiss courts, unfortunately, take a different view. An HIV-positive person risks criminal prosecution if he or she engages in risky sex – even if the contact does not result in the transmission of HIV.

What Swiss courts have to say

You are obliged to provide your partner with thorough protection. To date, courts have construed «thorough protection» exclusively as the use of a condom. However, it looks as though effective therapy (see page 19) might well also be considered «thorough protection».



If you comply with the rules for safer sex, you are not legally obliged to inform your partner about your diagnosis.

If you do not wish to comply with the rules for safer sex, you are obliged to tell your partner that you are HIV-positive.

You may even risk prosecution if your partner in unsafe sex knows that you are HIV-positive, and has agreed not to use a condom. A change in the law means that, as of 2016, this will cease to be a punishable offence.

Data
protection,
work and
insurance

DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Information on your HIV-positive status is protected by a variety of data protection provisions.



No one has the right to pass on information about your HIV diagnosis without your permission to anyone – not even your own family. It may be a good idea to address this explicitly with those you trust.

Physicians and their support staff (administrative and medical assistants) are similarly forbidden to pass on your information. They are obliged to maintain professional discretion as set out in the Swiss Criminal Code. Counsellors, employees of insurance companies, translators, the staff of AIDS centres and many others are obliged to confidentiality as set out in the Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection.

Right to information

Your data are collected by a variety of individuals and offices, such as your doctor, your insurance company and your employer.



You have the right to know what data is being collected about you, the purpose of such data collection, and who has access to this data.

WHAT ABOUT AT WORK?

Must I inform my employer?

You are under no circumstances obliged to tell your employer that you are HIV-positive.

Are there jobs I should not do?

In principle, you may hold any job you like in Switzerland. There is no risk of your infecting anyone with HIV as long as you comply with the appropriate provisions for hygiene.

What must I say when applying for a job?

You are also under no obligation to communicate your diagnosis when applying for a job, whether in your application materials or during an interview. **If you are asked about HIV, you may conceal the truth.** An employer is not authorised to address this subject to you.

Further information about the working world

Some obstacles still exist, however, for instance when buying into a pension plan or disability insurance policy.

Mandatory insurance

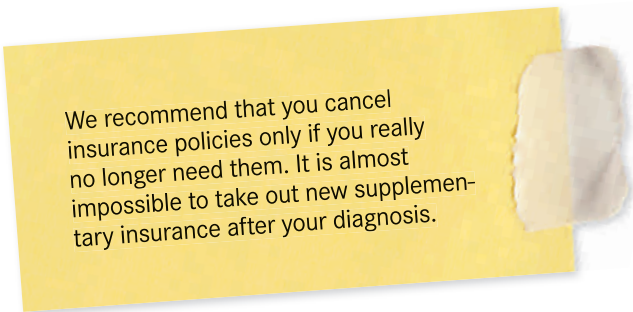
A diagnosis of HIV changes nothing in regard to any form of mandatory insurance in Switzerland, including:

- mandatory health insurance
- old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV)
- disability insurance (IV)
- mandatory occupational retirement plan (pension fund)
- unemployment insurance (ALV)

In none of these cases are you required to provide information. You may also continue switching health insurance providers as you see fit.

Insurance purchased BEFORE diagnosis

Any further insurance policies (private, supplementary) purchased before you were diagnosed HIV-positive are not at risk either, nor are you required to report your diagnosis in such cases.



We recommend that you cancel insurance policies only if you really no longer need them. It is almost impossible to take out new supplementary insurance after your diagnosis.

Insurance purchased AFTER diagnosis

You are likely to face major difficulties purchasing new private insurance (disability coverage, supplementary health benefits) after your diagnosis. Insurers are within their rights to ask about existing illnesses, and may refuse to cover you or do so only conditionally. You are bound to provide accurate information. However, it is by no means impossible to take out life insurance. For further information, please contact the legal advice service of the Swiss AIDS Federation (address on page 45).

Important



If you have so far only had an anonymous HIV test in a laboratory or hospital, make the most of this opportunity and – before your next appointment – get advice from a cantonal AIDS centre or from the Swiss AIDS Federation’s legal service (addresses on page 45), for advice on how you stand with regard to insurance.

Counselling

You are entitled to personal counselling in all matters concerning HIV from your regional AIDS centre or directly from the Swiss AIDS Federation's legal service (addresses on page 45).

HOW TO STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS

Free legal advice

Do you have a legal question that is related directly to HIV/AIDS? If so, you can call or write to the legal advice service at the Swiss AIDS Federation. We will look into your enquiry, and provide information, advice, and further contacts. We will also help you draft requests, applications, objections and appeals. Where necessary, we can also put you in touch with professional lawyers who we trust. **Your enquiry will be treated in the strictest confidence. Our service is free of charge.**

Our advisory team can be reached at these times:

Tuesdays 9 am to 12 noon and 2 to 4 pm

Thursdays 9 am to 12 noon and 2 to 4 pm

Tel. 044 447 11 11, recht@aids.ch

Discriminated against? Let us know!

Is your dentist refusing to treat you because you're HIV-positive? Is someone you know telling everyone that you're HIV-positive? You don't have to put up with it. Let the Swiss AIDS Federation know if you have experienced injustice.

Those living with HIV continue to be disadvantaged and face discrimination in many different areas of their lives. For example, many life insurers still categorically reject applications from HIV-positive individuals. Discriminatory behaviour also remains rife in the world of work. Applications ask for HIV tests and, after an individual has been «outed» as HIV-positive, they are sacked or their data protection rights violated.

The Swiss AIDS Federation is the federal reporting office for discrimination and infringements of privacy related to HIV and AIDS. We rely on reports from you to build a comprehensive picture of discrimination today, to fight it, and to provide the information people need.



Don't stay silent – tell us what happened!
Send a mail to recht@aids.ch, or report the discrimination to us (anonymously) using our online form at www.aids.ch

Addresses
and further
information

PUBLICATIONS

Brochures

«**Relationship and sexuality**» – Addresses the various questions and problems that may arise in these facets of an HIV-positive person's life and provides reliable information as a basis for decisions.

«**Ready for treatment?**» – Explains why sticking faithfully to therapy is crucial, and provides relevant tips and suggestions.

Swiss Aids News

Quarterly magazine with news about medication and the law (in German or French). Annual subscription CHF 40; price reduction possible on request.

Ordering address

Swiss AIDS Federation, P.O. Box 1118, 8031 Zurich
Telephone 044 447 11 13, fax 044 447 11 14. All brochures are available in a variety of languages and can be ordered by e-mail to shop@aids.ch. You can also find all publications online at www.shop.aids.ch. All materials ordered are sent in a plain envelope.

ADDRESSES

Swiss AIDS Federation

Konradstrasse 20, Postfach 1118, 8031 Zürich.
Tel. 044 447 11 11, Fax 044 447 11 14, aids@aids.ch, www.aids.ch

Regional AIDS centres

(Addresses at www.aids.ch or on 044 447 11 11)

The regional AIDS centres offer individual counselling and long-term support, as well as addresses of HIV specialists and information about meetings of HIV-positive people, suitable psychotherapists, organisations of/for migrants etc.

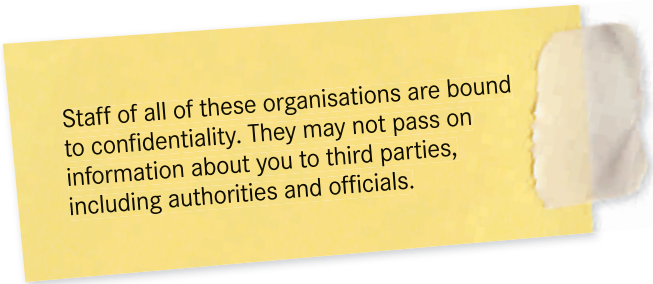
Legal advice

Swiss AIDS Federation, Monday 9 am to 12 pm, Tuesday and Thursday 9 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm, tel. 044 447 11 11. E-mail: recht@aids.ch.

Groupe sida Genève, legal advice, tel. 022 700 13 61, info@groupe sida.ch.

Checkpoints

Men who have sex with men can contact the Checkpoints in Geneva, Lausanne, Basel or Zurich. Checkpoints offer HIV testing, counselling, treatment and much more. For information, visit www.mycheckpoint.ch.



Staff of all of these organisations are bound to confidentiality. They may not pass on information about you to third parties, including authorities and officials.

HIV treatment centres in Switzerland

Aargau

Kantonsspital Aarau

Infektiologie, HIV-Sprechstunde, Haus 7, Tellstrasse, 5001 Aarau, 062 838 68 12
www.ksa.ch

Kantonsspital Baden

Infektiologie, HIV-Sprechstunde, Im Ergel, 5404 Baden, 056 486 25 84
www.kantonsspitalbaden.ch

Spital Region Oberaargau

Infektiologie, St. Urbanstrasse 67, 4901 Langenthal, 062 916 31 31
www.sro.ch

Basel

Universitätsspital Basel

Infektiologie & Spitalhygiene, HIV-Sprechstunde, Petersgraben 4, 4031 Basel
061 265 50 53, www.unispital-basel.ch

Basel

Kantonsspital Bruderholz

Abteilung Infektiologie und Spitalhygiene, Infektiologische Sprechstunde
Medizinisches Ambulatorium, 1. Stock, 4101 Bruderholz, 061 436 20 65
www.bruderholzspital.ch

Bern

Inselspital Bern

Sprechstunde der Universitätsklinik für Infektiologie und Reisemedizin
Polikliniktrakt 2, Eingang 29, Stock B, 3010 Bern, 031 632 25 25
www.infektiologie.insel.ch

Spitalzentrum Biel

Infektiologie, Vogelsang 84, 2502 Biel, 032 324 34 58, www.szb-chb.ch

Regionalspital Emmental

Infektiologie Spital Burgdorf, HIV-Sprechstunde, Oberburgstrasse 54,
3400 Burgdorf, 034 421 23 00, www.rs-e.ch

Spital Thun

Infektiologie, Krankenhausstrasse 12, 3600 Thun, 033 729 26 26
www.spitalstsag.ch

Geneva

Hôpitaux universitaires de Genève (HUG)

Services des maladies infectieuses, Unité VIH/Sida, Consultation ambulatoire
Rue Gabrielle-Perret-Gentil 4, 2^e étage, 022 372 96 17, www.hug-ge.ch

Graubünden

Kantonsspital Graubünden

Infektiologie und Spitalhygiene, Loëstrasse 170, 7000 Chur, 081 256 75 45
www.ksgr.ch

Lucerne

Kantonsspital Luzern

Infektiologie, 6000 Luzern, 041 205 11 11, www.luks.ch

Neuchâtel

Hôpital neuchâtelois – Pourtalès

Rue Maladière, 2000 Neuchâtel, 032 713 33 70, www.h-ne.ch

Hôpital neuchâtelois

Médecine interne, Rue de Chasseral 20, 2303 La Chaux-de-Fonds
032 967 24 49, www.h-ne.ch

St. Gallen

Kantonsspital St. Gallen

Fachbereich Infektiologie/Spitalhygiene, Infektiologische Sprechstunde,
Rorschacher Strasse 95, Haus 22, 9007 St. Gallen, 071 494 26 32
www.infekt.ch

Thurgau

Spital Thurgau AG

Kantonsspital Münsterlingen, HIV-Sprechstunde, 8596 Münsterlingen
071 686 21 72, www.stgag.ch

Ticino

Ospedale regionale di Lugano

Malattie infettive, Via Tesserete 46, 6903 Lugano, 091 811 61 11, www.eoc.ch

Ospedale regionale di Locarno

Malattie infettive, Via all'Ospedale 1, 6600 Locarno, 091 811 41 11, www.eoc.ch

Ospedale regionale di Bellinzona e Valli

Malattie infettive, 6500 Bellinzona, 091 811 91 11, www.eoc.ch

Ospedale regionale di Mendrisio

Malattie infettive, Via Turconi 23, 6850 Mendrisio, 091 811 31 11, www.eoc.ch

Clinica Luganese

Servizio medicina interna e malattie infettive, Via Soldino, 6900 Lugano,
091 960 81 11, www.clinicaluganese.ch

Vaud

Centre hospitalier universitaire vaudois (CHUV)

Service des maladies infectieuses, consultation de suivi pour le VIH,
Rue du Bugnon 46, 1011 Lausanne, 021 314 10 22, www.chuv.ch/min

Zurich

Universitätsspital Zürich

Klinik für Infektionskrankheiten und Spitalhygiene, Rämistrasse 100, 8091 Zürich
044 255 33 22, www.infektiologie.usz.ch

Klinik Im Park

Zentrum für Infektionskrankheiten, Bellariastrasse 38, 8038 Zürich
044 209 20 60, www.infekt-zuerich.ch

Doctors specialising in HIV

The www.hiv-pract.ch website is where you'll find a list of more doctors in the greater Zurich area who specialise in HIV.

INTERNET

Swiss sites

- www.aids.ch – The Swiss AIDS Federation website. All information available online. In German, French, Italian, and English.
- www.workpositive.ch – Comprehensive information for HIV-positive people in the working world. In German and French.
- www.positivrat.ch – The Positive Council (Positivrat) is a specialist organisation which represents the interests of people with HIV.
- www.house34.ch – The interactive platform by and for people with HIV. Live counselling for people with HIV every Tuesday from 8 pm to 10 pm. In German and French.


English and US sites

- **www.aidsmap.com** – Site of a network of NGOs in Great Britain with up-to-date information. In English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Rumanian and Russian.
- **www.poz.com** – US website and magazine. POZ addresses the wide spectrum of needs of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Offering daily news, treatment updates, personal profiles, investigative features, videos, blogs and an extensive online social network. In English and Spanish.

I HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE LANGUAGE

It is very important that you and your doctor understand each other. There are various ways to deal with a linguistic obstacle:

- You can bring someone along to interpret for you, but make sure it's someone you trust.
- Enquire at an HIV treatment centre or one of the larger hospitals, which usually have in-house translation services.
- You may also come with your own professional interpreter. In such cases, however, you will typically have to pay for the service yourself. Look for professional interpreters at www.inter-pret.ch or inquire at a regional AIDS centre.



The «Health Guide Switzerland» brochure contains all relevant information about the Swiss healthcare system, such as how and where to purchase insurance, where to go if you are ill, and what you can do for your health. The brochure is available in many different languages, and can be ordered or viewed online at www.migesplus.ch.

HELP OTHERS WITH HIV

By making a donation, you'll be supporting our work for those with HIV, specifically:

- direct assistance with problems with employers and insurance companies
- free legal advice
- emergency financial support
- lobbying for equal rights
- campaigns which promote greater solidarity in society, and help to break down prejudice and misconceptions about HIV

Thank you very much.

Aids-Hilfe Schweiz (Swiss Aids Federation), Zurich, Post Office account no. 30-10900-5, or donate online at www.aids.ch.

