

Taking Care: of YOU!

If you have recently been diagnosed with HIV, you may feel fearful and overwhelmed. Know that you are far from alone. Countless people and resources are available to help you and the more than 1 million people who are living with HIV in the U.S. today.

New treatment regimens have turned HIV into a chronic condition for many people. With a healthy lifestyle and the right medical care, people are living long, productive lives despite having an HIV diagnosis.

Still, learning that you have HIV may leave you feeling fearful. Where should you turn for help? Who should you tell? What should you do first? Inside are a few tips to help you through this difficult time.

For referrals to services in your area of the state, see the HIV Services Directory located at:

<http://tinyurl.com/HIV-Services-Directory>

Iowa Department of Public Health
Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis

Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
515-281-6801
<http://www.idph.iowa.gov>

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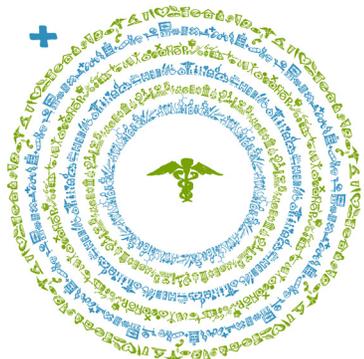


A Guide For
Staying Healthy

Taking Care: Your Health

- Find a doctor or licensed healthcare provider who has experience treating HIV.
- Get screened for other sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis, and TB (tuberculosis). Having these other conditions can cause serious health complications and having HIV makes you more vulnerable to those complications.

- Maintain a healthful lifestyle. Tobacco, alcohol, and drugs can weaken your immune system.



- Sign up for health insurance. The Affordable Care Act ensures that you can't be denied health insurance because of your HIV diagnosis.
- Learn about the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, social support, and case management services that are available to help provide HIV medications and essential health and support services to low-income people living with HIV and their families.
- See the HIV Services Directory located at <http://tinyurl.com/HIV-Services-Directory>, or contact the Iowa Department of Public Health at 515-281-6801 for referrals to services in your area of the state.

Taking Care: Others in Your Life

- Participate in the confidential Partner Notification Program. Trained specialists can help you notify your partner(s) with whom you've had oral, anal, or vaginal sex or with whom you have shared needles. This is done confidentially, without sharing any information about you or when the exposure may have occurred.



- Because you have been infected with HIV, you can give the virus to others, even if you don't feel sick. This can happen through unprotected sex or by sharing needles. You can protect others by using condoms and not sharing needles or drug injection equipment. By doing this, you can also protect yourself from other strains of HIV. You should not donate blood, plasma, semen, or tissue.
- If you inject drugs, do not share drug equipment including needles, cotton, spoons, or other items that may have your blood on them.
- If you are a woman, you can pass HIV to your baby during pregnancy, during labor, or through breast feeding. Ask your doctor what you can do to protect your child. Proper treatment has nearly eliminated new infections among newborns in the U.S.
- In all cases, getting and staying on treatment is your first line of defense for yourself and others. HIV medications can reduce the risk of transmission to others by 96%.

Taking Care: HIV & The Law

According to Iowa Code Chapter 709D, if you are going to be in a situation that could place another person at significant risk of HIV transmission by exposure to your bodily fluids (through anal or vaginal sex, for example), you could face serious criminal penalties for failing to take required precautions to protect your partners from exposure.

However, you can avoid criminal penalties by following the prescribed treatment regimen and following the behavioral recommendations of your medical provider or a public health official.

Depending on your unique circumstances and the health recommendations made to you, this often involves:

- Substantially complying with your prescribed treatment regimen; **and**
- Following behavioral recommendations to limit the risk of transmission. Generally, this means using condoms for vaginal or anal sex. Condoms are highly effective in preventing HIV transmission to your partners when used correctly and consistently.

