

BREAKTHROUGH ADVANCEMENTS IN TREATING HIV LEAD TO HEALTHIER OUTCOMES

For many of the estimated 1.2 million people living with HIV in the US, medications like ART are making it possible for people with HIV to live longer and healthier. ART stands for Antiretroviral Therapy and is a combination of medicines that reduces the risk of HIV transmission and slows the progression of the virus.

But how does it work? ART stops HIV from making copies of itself, consequently reducing the amount of HIV in the body.



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CONFIDENTIAL HIV TESTING PROVIDES RESULTS, REDUCES BARRIERS

Since the early days of the HIV epidemic in the 80's, fear and stigma have kept many Americans from getting a HIV test. Sadly, the shame of being diagnosed with HIV during that time exists to this day and is one of the reasons people refuse to get tested. Stigma-related barriers to testing are real but thanks to the FDA approved OraQuick at home testing kit,

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GETTING PREP'ED FOR YOUR NEXT HIV TEST?

Since first being introduced in 2012, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) has been a game changer in the field of HIV prevention. PrEP, when taken consistently, has been shown to be highly effective at preventing HIV transmission from sex or injection drug use in HIV negative people. In fact, studies have shown a 99



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FACTS:

- 1 in 7 people with HIV don't know that they have it
- Someone is diagnosed with HIV every 9.5 minutes in the US.
- HIV can be transmitted from mother to baby during pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding.
- Men can acquire HIV from women.

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Reducing the virus gives CD4 cells a fighting chance to ward off contagions. More CD4 cells means more opportunities for your body to fight infections and for you to stay healthy.

As an added bonus, ART can also help patients living with HIV reach an undetectable status. Having an undetectable viral load means that HIV cannot be passed to their sexual partners. Studies have shown that transmission cannot happen so long as a patient is taking their medications as prescribed and meeting with their doctor regularly for lab work.

This breakthrough in treatment is part of the “U=U” campaign which means undetectable equals untransmittable. By educating the public, U=U has made great strides in health advocacy and HIV knowledge. The U=U campaign hopes to change the narrative surrounding people living with HIV made possible by medications like ART.

For more information about the basics of HIV treatment, visit: <https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/hiv-treatment-basics>

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people at risk for HIV can conduct a test from the comfort of their own home with results provided in as little as 20 to 40 minutes. Do it at home testing provides results anonymously and gives the testee privacy. Easy to read instructions are provided in the kit. A mouth swab of the gums is used to detect HIV antibodies; no needle prick required. A kit can then be disposed of discreetly with bagging materials provided by the test.

OraQuick results can be easily interpreted on the testing kit. For patients that test negative

and are at a high risk of acquiring HIV, continue to test every three to six months as dictated by the CDC. For patients that test positive, a consumer support line available 24/7 can answer questions and provide healthcare provider referrals for follow up. A confirmatory test provided by clinics like CAN Community Health can give you the answers you need.

Even though stigma around HIV testing still exists, at home test kits can provide privacy for you and give you the information you need to live a longer and healthier life. Free kits can be found at CAN Community Health. <https://www.cancommunityhealth.org/>

More details for at home testing by the FDA can be found here: <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/approved-blood-products/information-regarding-oraquick-home-hiv-test>

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percent effectiveness rate for people who have condomless sex and 74 percent effectiveness from injection drug use in preventing HIV.

Many people wonder where they can get PrEP or if it's even necessary for them. The answers to these questions can be found during your next HIV test. Clinics like CAN Community Health provide PrEP linkage after evaluating their HIV risk factors and when a patient receives a negative HIV rapid test result.

Answers can also be found from the CDC which recommends that any HIV negative person who has had vaginal or anal sex in the past 6 months and has had a sexual partner living with HIV, has not consistently used a condom or has been diagnosed with a STD within that time frame be on PrEP.

During your next visit to CAN Community Health, ask your testing counselor about PrEP or visit <https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets/pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep-to-learn-more>.