

## HIV Treatment

Treating HIV has come a long way. Most treatments are now a once a day pill with few side effects. As with most medications there are risks to be aware of. Your provider will talk with you about the best possible treatment for HIV.

New treatments are coming that will make it easier. With proper care you can become virally suppressed, also known as undetectable.

## What does UNDETECTABLE mean?

People who are living with HIV and taking medication as directed can achieve viral suppression. Viral suppression means that you are still living with HIV, but the virus is so well controlled it will not be detected on a viral load test, thus making you undetectable.

It is important to know that people who are undetectable for 6 months or longer **WILL NOT** transmit HIV through sexual contact.

If you have ever seen U=U it means  
*Undetectable=Untransmittable*

## How would I pay for care?

The state of Colorado is amazing when it comes to helping its residents pay for HIV care. Our parent organization **Colorado Health Network** has insurance navigators that will help you to enroll in programs that can pay for medication and care. We might be able to help you pay your insurance premium. Don't have insurance? That's fine, we can work with that too.

## How do I start these services?

If you have recently tested positive you should get a confirmatory test. This test can be done with

### Denver Public Health

660 Bannock St. Suite 2860  
303-602-3652

### Colorado Health Network

6260 E Colfax Ave  
303-962-5317

### Planned Parenthood

Multiple locations  
303-832-5069

## Previously Diagnosed and Fallen Out of Care

Life happens and sometimes people fall out of care. **Colorado Health Network** is here to help you get back into care. You can reach our admission team and get with a case manager by calling **303-837-1501**

## What if I'm unknown to the government?

Not a problem. The services we provide and the care that you can access is not dependent on your citizenship status. Seeking medical care does not affect your status at all.

## What else should I know?

You can visit our parent company website **coloradohealthnetwork.org** for more information. Educating yourself on HIV will help to enhance your perspective. The internet is full of outdated/completely wrong information. Please be sure to get your information from your provider or a trusted source. The biggest things we want you know are below.

- **You are MORE than a virus!**
- **You will have sex again**
- **Support is all around you**
- **You are NOT alone**

hey  
Denver!

SEXUAL HEALTHCARE FOR EVERYBODY  
SALUD SEXUAL PARA TODOS

# HIV Guide

HeyDenver.org  
303-962-2880

## What To Expect After You Have Tested Positive

- HeyDenver can provide confirmatory testing, or we can make you an appointment for a confirmatory test at CHN or Denver Health.
- After a confirmatory test, if it is a true positive, you will get a case manager to help you with every step including getting on health insurance, seeking treatment, notifying partners and mental health assistance/support.

Colorado has funds that are in place to help you with:

- Medical care costs
- Prescription costs
- Rental assistance
- Food

These services are available to you! **Your income, race, language or citizenship status will NOT affect the care you are entitled to receive.**

Our parent organization can offer counseling and case management and medical care. The state of Colorado will also contact you to help with informing partners. A case manager will help you navigate all of this. This service is completely anonymous and voluntary in Colorado. You have a choice and you have control.

### Who should I tell?

- Disclosing your status can be a very intimidating thing but it is something that has benefits. Having an HIV diagnosis can be hard to process. A supportive friend can be a great comfort. Please keep in mind that you DO NOT have to tell someone until YOU'RE ready. A case manager will usually advise you how to navigate this process.
- Telling sexual partners can be tricky and is really a skill that will develop over time. Our parent organization Colorado Health Network has free counseling available where you can learn skills for both disclosing and coping.

## Symptoms

- Fever
- Chills
- Rash
- Night Sweats
- Muscle Aches
- Sore Throat
- Fatigue
- Swollen Lymph Nodes
- Loss of appetite
- GI Problems
- Dry Cough

### What If I Just Tested Positive?

- Take a breath. Being diagnosed with HIV can be shocking and upsetting, but with proper care, education and treatment, you can live a long, healthy and normal life.
- This is not to say that living with HIV doesn't come with challenges, but it's no longer the death sentence it was once perceived to be.
- Point of care tests like the ones HeyDenver gives are considered a preliminary test and confirmatory testing must be done on all reactive (positive tests). **You need a confirmatory test.**
- There are people all around you that can help you. HeyDenver will help you start care. We recommend you begin considering the following:
  1. Become informed on your diagnosis and what it really means.
  2. Find support. This might be a close friend, a therapist, or community group.
  3. Find a provider and start treatment. HeyDenver can help you with this.
  4. Improve your overall health. This might mean watching your diet or being mindful of your mental health.

## What is HIV?

- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).
- HIV in the body will enter your T-Cells and convert them to HIV cells. T-Cells are what fights off infections in your body. People with low T-Cells have a harder time fighting off simple infections which can lead to opportunistic infections. The HIV virus causes AIDS when your T-Cell count falls below 200.
- There is no cure for HIV/AIDS, but there are amazing treatments that we will go over in another section.

### How is HIV transmitted?

There are 4 fluids that can transmit HIV.

1. Blood
2. Semen
3. Vaginal Fluid
4. Breast/chest Milk

**One or more of these fluids has to be present for HIV infection to occur.** These fluids must

come in contact with a mucous membrane or damaged tissue or be directly injected into the bloodstream (from a needle or syringe) for transmission to occur. Mucous membranes are found inside the rectum, vagina, penis, and mouth.

**Contact with dried blood, dried semen, or other fluids poses little to no risk. You CANNOT get HIV through casual contact.**

Below are ways that HIV is commonly passed.

1. Condomless sex with someone who has a detectable viral load (positive for HIV)
2. Mother to child transmission
3. Sharing needles or works with someone who has a detectable viral load.