

# The basics

## Better off knowing



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This leaflet can be viewed in large format as a PDF.  
Call NAM on 020 3242 0820.



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### Notes

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### Want to find out more?

#### For more information on this topic:

- read our 'An HIV treatment journey' and 'When should I start treatment?' leaflets; or
- speak to an adviser at THT Direct (phone: 0808 802 1221).

#### For more information about HIV

You can get free fact sheets, booklets, email bulletins and a newsletter from our website at [www.aidsmap.com/resources](http://www.aidsmap.com/resources). You can get answers to common questions at [www.aidsmap.com/hiv-basics](http://www.aidsmap.com/hiv-basics) and find local services at [www.aidsmap.com/e-atlas](http://www.aidsmap.com/e-atlas).

**Contact us** by calling 020 3242 0820 or by sending an email to [info@nam.org.uk](mailto:info@nam.org.uk)

#### Has this resource been useful to you?

Please let us know what you think by visiting our website at [www.aidsmap.com/feedback](http://www.aidsmap.com/feedback), phoning us or sending an email to [info@nam.org.uk](mailto:info@nam.org.uk). Your feedback helps us to improve the services we offer you.

You can contact us to find out more about the scientific research and information we have used to produce this leaflet.

**We recommend that you discuss the information in this leaflet with a doctor or other health worker.**

# The sooner you know you have HIV, the sooner you can get the right medical care.

## Finding out that you have HIV can be very hard.

It will probably change your life forever.

But in terms of looking after your health, it's much better to know.

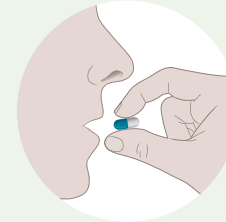


## If you know you have HIV, you can take steps to get it under control.

With medical care, you will have a longer and healthier life.



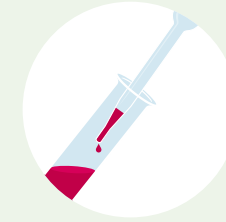
You'll know when it's the right time to take anti-HIV drugs.



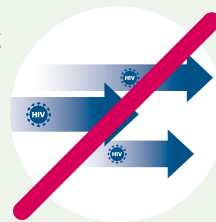
Treatment will protect your immune system from damage and help you stay healthy.



Your doctor can use blood tests to keep an eye on your health.



You can take steps to prevent passing HIV on to your sexual partner or partners.



## If you don't know you have HIV, it could get out of control and cause long-term damage.

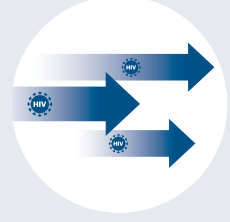
Untreated HIV will shorten your life.



Untreated HIV will damage your immune system and make you ill.



You may pass HIV on to your sexual partner or partners without realising it.



### Important points

● The sooner HIV is diagnosed, the fewer health problems it will cause you.

● With the medical care and treatment that is available in the UK, most people with HIV can live a long and healthy life.