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**Thanks to all of the professionals and people with HIV who have helped us to develop this leaflet.**

# The basics

## Undetectable viral load



This leaflet is available in large format as a PDF.  
Call NAM on 020 7837 6988.



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### Notes

#### Why it's good to have an undetectable viral load

- If you have very little HIV, it won't be able to attack and weaken your immune system, which is the body's natural defence system.
- If your immune system is strong, you are less likely to get infections and illnesses.
- An undetectable viral load reduces your risk of passing on HIV.

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### Want to find out more?

#### For more information on this topic

- Read our 'Transmission and viral load' leaflet.
- Read our 'CD4, viral load & other tests' booklet.

#### For more information about HIV

- Visit our website [www.aidsmap.com](http://www.aidsmap.com).
- Speak to an adviser at THT Direct (phone: 0808 802 1221).

#### For information in other languages

- Visit [www.aidsmap.com/translations](http://www.aidsmap.com/translations).

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

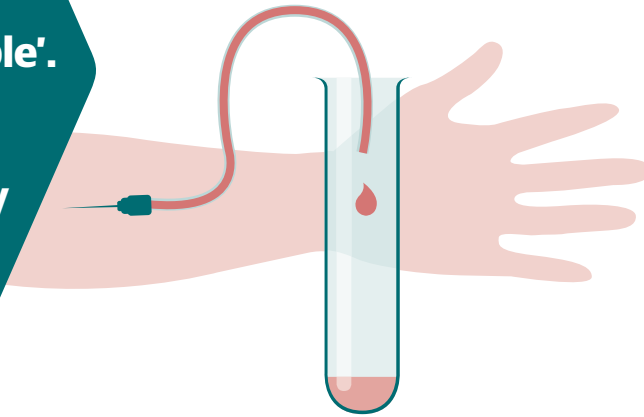
Please let us know what you think. Your feedback helps us to improve the services we offer.

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.**

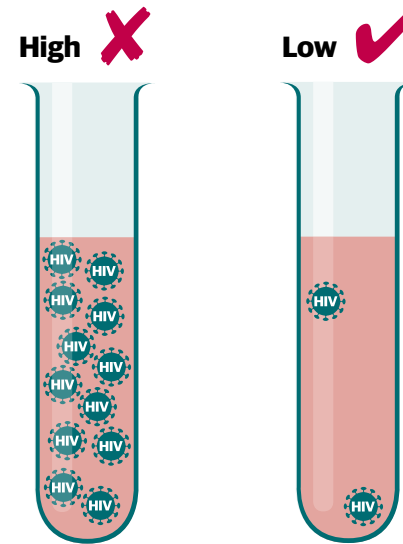
The aim of HIV treatment is to have a viral load that is 'undetectable'.

But what does that mean and why is it important?



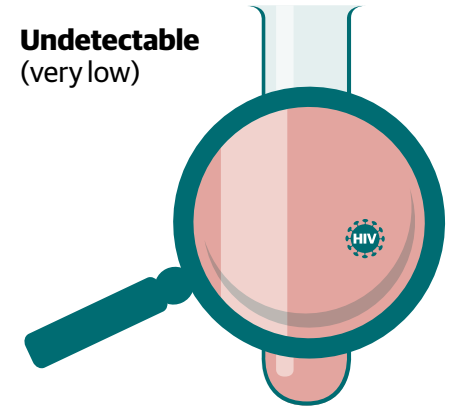
1 A viral load test tells you **how much HIV** there is in a drop of blood.

2 Test results give you a good idea of whether the amount of HIV is high or low.

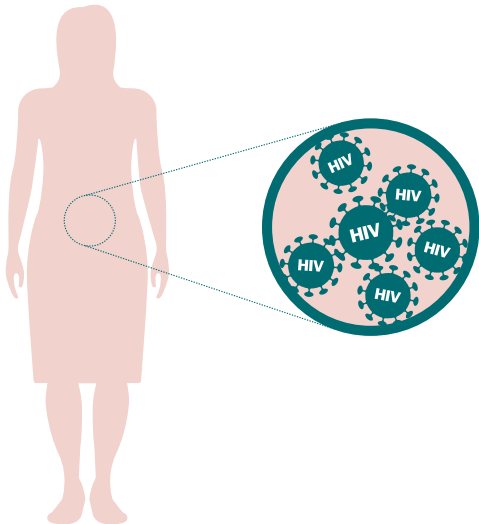


3 However, the tests can't measure very small amounts of HIV. When you have very little HIV, you will be told that your viral load is 'undetectable'. This means that there was so little HIV in one sample of blood that the test couldn't find any.

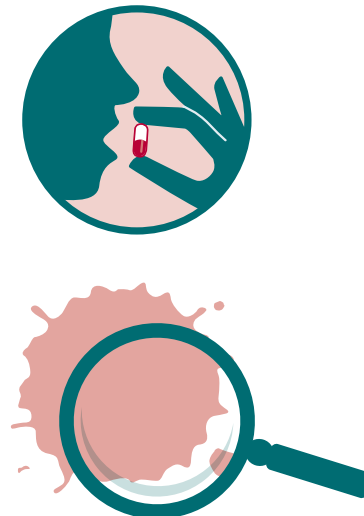
**Undetectable**  
(very low)



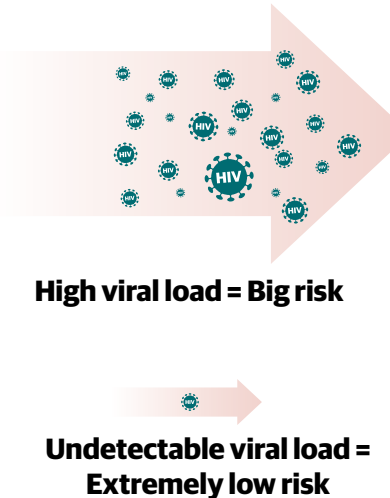
4 It doesn't mean that HIV has disappeared entirely. It will still be present in other parts of your body, like the gut.



5 The aim of HIV treatment is to have an undetectable viral load. This means that HIV is being kept under control.



6 An undetectable viral load massively reduces your risk of passing HIV on.



### Important points

- If your viral load result is undetectable, there is only a little HIV in your body. This means that HIV is being kept under control.
- An undetectable viral load shows that HIV treatment is working and that the risk of passing HIV on is extremely low.