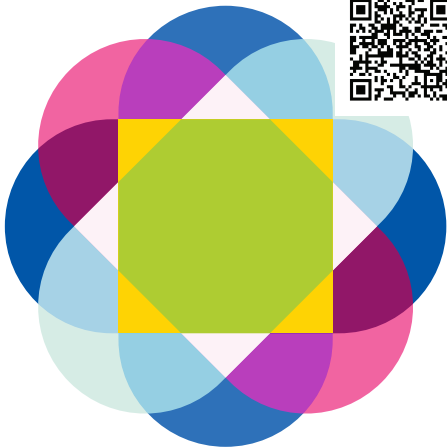


Pocket size

i-base

# ART

Antiretroviral  
Therapy



May 2023

This leaflet  
is about HIV  
treatment  
(ART).

It is for  
anyone who  
wants more  
information.



Web links are for  
more information.

“I know I was really unlucky to catch HIV. I was diagnosed after one low-risk experience.

But I knew immediately that I wanted to start treatment.

Learning and understanding how ART works and then deciding to use it was an important part of how I chose to move forward.”

- Lenny

## Does ART really work?

# Yes.

- It is better for your health.
- Life expectancy will be longer.
- It also protects your partners.



[i-base.info/PARTNER-study](http://i-base.info/PARTNER-study)

More than 28 million people use ART globally.

It works for adults and children, for women and men, including transgender people.

It works no matter how you were infected, whether this was sexually, by injecting drugs, at birth or from using blood or blood products.

Taking ART as prescribed reduces the HIV in your body to tiny amounts (called “undetectable”).

You will still be HIV positive but you can live a long and healthy life.

**Does everyone  
living with HIV  
need ART?**



**Mostly, yes.**

ART is now recommended for everyone. This is in guidelines from the UK, Europe, the US and by WHO.

ART is easy to take. It often involves only one or two pills a day.

When not on ART, HIV can damage your health even when you feel well.

You can  
choose when  
to begin ART.

You can choose  
which meds are  
likely to best  
fit your life.

You can also  
change meds to  
get the right ART,  
if you need to.



[i-base.info/ART-choice](http://i-base.info/ART-choice)

## Which ART?

Decide with  
your doctor  
which meds are  
best for you.

Most people find their first ART is right. But it is easy to change meds if you get side effects from one of the first drugs.



[i-base.info/side-effects](http://i-base.info/side-effects)



“Talk to your  
doctor about  
ART.

It needs to fit  
to your life,  
schedules  
and routines  
as much as  
possible.”

- Xavi

## Adherence

The most important thing when you start ART is to take your meds as prescribed. This is called adherence.

If you are worried, there are lots of ways to help.

A good routine really helps.

This might just involve taking one pill a day.



[i-base.info/adherence-tips](http://i-base.info/adherence-tips)

# 98%

... of people starting ART in a large international study had an undetectable viral load after a year of treatment.

The results showed that early ART is safe and effective.

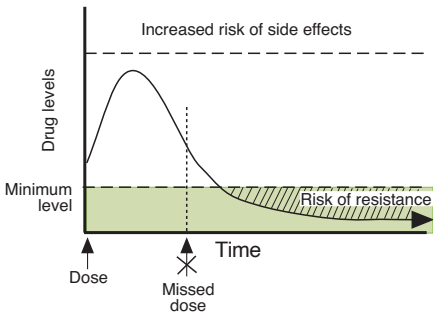
They showed that daily ART worked for thousands of people from very different backgrounds.

It is easy for your meds to just become a regular part of life.



[i-base.info/START-study](http://i-base.info/START-study)

## Adherence is important. Missing doses or being late can cause drug resistance



Being late with your meds lets the drug levels fall to where resistance can develop. The more often you are late, the greater the chance of resistance. *Never double-dose if you miss a dose though.*

# What else...?

The full version of this leaflet has more about meds, adherence, getting on with your doctor, side effects, the NHS, support and learning about your health.

i-Base can post the printed booklet or you can read everything online.

  [i-base.info/ART](http://i-base.info/ART)

We also answer questions by phone, email and online.

  [i-base.info/qa](http://i-base.info/qa)



## Tests to monitor your health

### CD4 count

- Your CD4 count tells you about your immune system.
- The range for HIV negative adults is about 400 to 1600. Getting above 500 is considered normal.
- Even with a very low CD4 count, ART can help your immune system recover.

### Viral load (VL)

- This test shows how much virus is in a sample of blood.
- On ART, viral load should be less than 50 copies/mL.
- This is called undetectable and it makes HIV difficult to transmit.

**More info**



**i-base.info**

**0808 800 6013**



[i-base.info/references](https://i-base.info/references)

## **Feedback**

surveymonkey.  
com/r/BBZPMFH



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[More pages >>>](#)

“It is an exciting time for HIV care...

ART is the routine next step after finding out you are HIV positive.

Taking control over this aspect of your health can be one of the easiest ways to deal with HIV.

You can then carry on with your life.”

– Simon