

COVID-19 AND HIV

Understanding Risk

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can cause mild or severe symptoms. People over age 60 and those with certain chronic medical conditions including heart or lung disease or diabetes are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19.

The impact of COVID-19 on people living with HIV is unknown. However, people who have undetectable viral loads, a CD4 count above 350, and who are taking HIV medication are unlikely to be more at risk for severe COVID-19 illness simply because of those factors.

Recommendations for People With HIV

- Continue taking your HIV medication as prescribed.
- When refilling prescriptions, ask for a 90-day supply of medication.
- Consider a telemedicine visit rather than an in-person visit if such appointments are offered by your healthcare provider.
- Develop an action plan with your provider or your pharmacist to ensure access to medication if you run out or during emergency situations.
- If for any reason you are not taking HIV medication, contact an HIV provider as soon as possible to discuss options.
- Ensure your vaccinations are up to date, including influenza and pneumococcal (pneumonia).
- Maintain communication with your provider, even if by phone.
- Stay connected to your friends, family, or support system. Maintaining communications is a form of staying healthy.



Protecting Yourself and Others

The COVID-19 pandemic will potentially overburden the US healthcare system and healthcare workers. Seek COVID-19 testing only if you have symptoms. This ensures better access to assistance for people who are sicker and in urgent need of testing and medical care.

To help protect yourself and others from COVID-19, follow these steps:

- Contact your medical provider if you have COVID-19 symptoms, such as a cough, fever, and shortness of breath. When seeking evaluation for COVID-19, alert the health staff to ensure they are prepared for your arrival. You might be redirected for testing elsewhere.
- Practice regular handwashing with soap and water, particularly after touching objects like doorknobs and handling cellphones.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of the tissue immediately.
- Avoid touching your face, especially with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you feel sick.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick with a cough, fever, and shortness of breath.
- Avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel, shopping trips, eating out, and social visits until further notice.

Resources and More Information

DC Government Coronavirus Response: <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>

DC Government HIV Information: <https://dchealth.dc.gov/living-with-hiv>

World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

TheBody: <https://www.thebody.com/health/hiv-coronavirus-covid-19>

DC AIDS Drug Assistance Program: Call the DC ADAP Hotline for questions: **(202) 671-4815**

National Institutes of Health Aids Info: https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/html/8/covid-19-and-persons-with-hiv-interim-guidance/o?utm_source=AIDSinfo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=3-20-20-COVID19_Guidance