

## What to do if we have been exposed to HIV?

HIV can take years before it makes someone sick, so it's possible to have the illness and not know.

We can't tell if we have HIV by the way we look or feel. It is not only gay people who get HIV – everyone can!

**Remember, it's not who we are that counts, it's what we do.**

The only way to find out if we have caught HIV is by having a check-up that tests for HIV. This test can be done by our local sexual health worker, doctor, health service or sexual health clinic.

If we know or think we have been exposed to HIV from:

- **having sex without a condom**
- **a condom breaking while having safe sex**
- **sharing fits**

**Our best protection from HIV is to always have safe sex and to inject safely.**

## PrEP = Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis.

**PrEP is used before HIV exposure to prevent HIV infection**

Taking PrEP is as simple as taking one oral pill a day, and it only takes about a week to provide maximum protection from HIV. Talk to your doctor to see if PrEP is right for you. Only you and your doctor are best placed to decide if PrEP is suited for you.

For more information visit [www.comeprepd.info](http://www.comeprepd.info)

## PEP = Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

**PEP is a month-long course of anti-HIV drugs that may prevent HIV infection AFTER a possible exposure.**

PEP is a treatment that may prevent HIV transmission and is available to someone who may have been exposed to HIV (example: if the condom breaks). PEP must be taken

within 72 hours of exposure to be effective (ideally within 2 hours or ASAP). PEP is NOT a guarantee that it will STOP someone from being infected.

For more information about PEP and where to access it visit [www.getpep.info/](http://www.getpep.info/)

## Living with HIV/AIDS

If we have an HIV test and it shows that we have HIV it is important to remember that we are not alone.

It is normal to feel frightened and alone, angry or unsure about the future.

There are lots of people to talk to. We could talk to other people with HIV/AIDS to learn from them how they deal with the illness.

Talking to others who know and understand can help us to get on with our life.

Finding out early that we have HIV means that we can start looking after our health. This includes taking HIV medicines which our doctor can help us decide the right time to start. The HIV medicines help most people lead healthier lives. Most people with HIV live for many years without getting sick.

## Sex and living with HIV:

Living with HIV/AIDS does not mean we cannot have sex anymore, it just means having safe sex is more important for us and our sex partner/s.

Safe sex will help stop HIV being spread to our sex partner/s. Having safe sex protects us from getting other STIs and illnesses that can make us very sick.



## 2 Spirits/Queensland AIDS Council

2 Spirits is able to provide support and information about HIV/AIDS, Safe Sex Practices, STIs and Hepatitis etc.

[www.quac.org.au](http://www.quac.org.au)

### Brisbane & Southern Qld

Phone: 07 3017 1777

Email: [2spirits@quac.org.au](mailto:2spirits@quac.org.au)

Free call 1800 177 434

### Cairns & North Qld

Phone: 07 4041 5451

Email: [2spirits@quac.org.au](mailto:2spirits@quac.org.au)

Free call 1800 884 401

### Clinic 30

Phone 07 3017 1777

Email: [clinic30@quac.org.au](mailto:clinic30@quac.org.au)



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# Holding our own

## HIV

An information guide on HIV/AIDS, for Indigenous Gay Men and Sistergirls.

This information is to help protect our future and improve understanding and support for those living with these infections.



## About this pamphlet

This pamphlet is written by Murri ones who are gay. It tells us as gay men and sistergirls how to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and Hepatitis C (Hep C). It also helps us to understand and support our people who are living with these illnesses.

This pamphlet is for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gay men and sistergirls no matter which mob you belong to - city or country people, islander or mainlander.

It is important for all of us to be fully aware of the risks of HIV/AIDS, STIs and Hep C, not only to ourselves, but also to our families, our younger ones (young gay men and sistergirls) and our communities. There are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland living with HIV/AIDS and unfortunately some have died from this disease.

This pamphlet is supported by Elders who went to the Minjerriba (Stradbroke Island) HIV/AIDS Elders Forum in 1999. This information does not mean to offend anyone. Non-Indigenous readers should understand respect and not use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander words without consent when talking or writing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



### What is HIV?

#### **HIV stands for Human Immuno-deficiency Virus**

**Human** = This illness only affects people.

**Immuno-deficiency** = The immune system which fights germs in our bodies is deficient, that means it can't work properly.

**Virus** = A virus is a very small germ that can grow quickly and make us sick when it is inside our body.

HIV attacks the body's immune system. The immune system is what protects and keeps our body healthy and strong.

### What is AIDS?

#### **AIDS is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**

**Acquired** = To get infected with illness.

**Immune** = Our body's defence system which fights germs in our body.

**Deficiency** = When our immune system is damaged and not working properly.

**Syndrome** = A syndrome is not just one illness, it means a 'big mob' of illnesses.

When the immune system has been badly damaged by HIV, a person can become very sick. AIDS is the name given to a 'big mob' of different diseases that make people who have HIV very sick.

### Is there a cure for HIV?

#### **No, there is no cure for HIV.**

There are medicines that can help to manage this illness. Many people living with HIV can live healthier lives if they find out **early**, start looking after their health and take HIV medicines, although these do not work for everyone.

### We can't get HIV from

- safe sex (see "what is safe sex?")
- kissing – we can't get HIV from someone's spit(saliva)
- touching someone – like shaking hands, hugging, cuddling or massage
- sharing food and drink, knives, forks, spoons, drinking glasses
- caring and looking after someone who has HIV/AIDS
- mosquitoes, head or genital lice (crabs), fleas, ticks and other biting insects
- swimming pools, bath water
- toilets

### Is there a test for HIV?

#### **Yes, there is a test.**

Talking to our local doctor will help us to understand what it means to have an HIV test and how to protect and look after ourselves in the future. We shouldn't feel shame to talk with and ask questions from our doctor or nurse before and after having the HIV test – they are there to help us.

### What is Safe Sex?

#### **Safe Sex is:**

- using a condom on our buddu (penis) when having sex (anal or bum sex) with someone
- someone wearing a condom on their buddu when they are having sex (bum sex) with us
- cuddling
- kissing
- massaging
- licking
- wanking each other's buddu (mutual masturbation).

Avoid getting someone's cum (semen) in any cuts, sores, or breaks in the skin on the hand. Cover these with a water proof bandage to stop HIV and other germs from getting into our body.

HIV cannot be spread from mouth to buddu. (see section "What is unsafe sex?")

For more information about safe sex, don't be shame or embarrassed to talk to the local sexual health worker or doctor.

### What is Unsafe Sex?

#### **Unsafe Sex is:**

- us having anal (bum) sex with someone, without using a condom and 'big mobs' of water-based lube on our buddu (penis) and cumming (ejaculating).
- someone having bum sex with us, without them using a condom on their buddu and cumming (ejaculating).
- us or someone else having bum sex without using a condom and pulling out (pulling the buddu out of the bum) before cumming.
- sucking buddu (oral sex) is low risk for getting HIV. The risk is much larger if someone cums in our mouth, especially if we have cuts, sores or bleeding gums. (It's best not to brush our teeth for at least two hours before sucking buddu.)
- sucking buddu even without cumming is unsafe for some other STIs like the clap (gonorrhoea) and chlamydia.
- rimming (licking someone's bum) is unsafe for STIs like the clap (gonorrhoea) and chlamydia. To prevent catching STIs from rimming, we should use a dental dam, glad wrap or a condom that has been split open and covers the bum hole. HIV cannot be passed on by rimming.

If you have questions about what's safe and what's not, be game and talk to the local sexual health worker or doctor.