

Living Positively



We're here in whatever way works best for you:

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Living with HIV today is nothing like it was in the 1980s. However, receiving a positive result can raise many concerns and questions. Living a positive life requires adjustments and understanding of your rights.

That's exactly why we created this booklet—to provide you with essential information that can help ease some of the uncertainty.

Just received a positive result?
[Click for a short video made for you](#)

What About My Health

Your health status at diagnosis and your body's response vary individually. But it's important to know that with today's advanced antiretroviral treatment (ART), the virus has minimal impact on day-to-day life.

Once your immune system is in a healthy range and your viral load is suppressed, there is no greater risk of illness than for anyone else. Life expectancy for people living with HIV is the same as for those without it—some would say longer, due to regular medical monitoring.

With attention to your body's needs, everything you've dreamed of doing is still possible.

HIV Treatment

Today's Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) is so advanced that in consultation with your doctor, you can choose between a once-daily pill or bimonthly injections—both with minimal side effects. Just remember to inform your doctor about any additional medications or supplements you're taking.

If you've just been diagnosed, updating your family doctor and medical file will allow automatic prescription renewals every three months. After six months of continuous treatment, you're entitled to receive a three-month supply in advance.

For more information about HIV therapy:



Key Medical Terms

CD4 – Immune system cells affected by HIV. This is one of your regular lab tests. The normal range is 440–1400 cells per mm^3 , though individual factors vary. It's more useful to track the T-cell percentage (normal range: 25–65%) as it's more stable.

Viral Load – The number of HIV copies in one milliliter of blood. This is another routine test that checks whether your treatment is effectively suppressing the virus to an **undetectable** level.

Key Medical Terms

Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) – Reaching undetectable viral load means the virus is suppressed to the point where it cannot be detected in lab tests. In this status, HIV cannot be transmitted to others—not even through condomless sex (100% certainty!). This means you can live like anyone else, including having children without worrying about transmission.

Tip for adherence:

Tie your medication to a daily habit (e.g., brushing your teeth) to help make it part of your routine and reduce missed doses

More About Undetectability

Knowing that undetectable status both protects your health and eliminates transmission risk is a major breakthrough in HIV care.

World Health Organization (WHO) declared that sex with an undetectable person—even without a condom—carries a 0% risk of transmission.

With consistent adherence, most people reach undetectable status quickly and stably, enabling full and healthy lives with sexuality, relationships, parenthood, and healthy aging.

A few words about **Family doctor**

HIV treatment and monitoring are done in specialized clinics, but day-to-day health care involves your GP. It's important to feel comfortable with them as partners in your well-being.

A message for your doctor

Scan the QR code and show your family doctor. (Especially useful for your first post-diagnosis visit)

One issue that may come up is how your HIV status is recorded in medical documents. You have the right to request that your HIV status be noted only when medically necessary. If in doubt, refer your doctor to consult with your HIV specialist.

What about my Sexuality

A new diagnosis may affect your sexual well-being—especially early on. Like other life changes, you'll find your way back to routine.

There is no reason not to enjoy sex just as you did before your diagnosis. People living with HIV can live without fear of transmission and the need to disclose your status to sexual partners, once the doctor confirmed you're undetectable and adhering to treatment.

Regardless of viral load, condoms have always been an effective protection method, and PrEP is now available for HIV-negative partners who want additional protection.

And What About Relationships

Absolutely yes - even with HIV and especially with undetectable status, relationships are a natural and fulfilling part of life.

In the past, many people sought relationships within the HIV-positive community. Today, awareness has shifted, and mixed-status couples are common, thriving, and building families.

One challenge may be disclosing your status to a potential partner. First date? Third? Before or after sex? There's no single right answer—it depends on what feels right to you.

Know your Rights

- **National Insurance (Bituach Leumi)** – HIV diagnosis grants 30% disability recognition, which usually does not include a pension but can entitle you to vocational rehabilitation if your health deteriorates.
- **Kupat Holim**– Updating your status with your health provider entitle you to free vaccinations, referrals, and specialist consultations, and sometimes even non-HIV medications at no cost.
- **Disclosure** – You are NOT required to disclose your HIV status to anyone, including tattoo artists, beauticians and even doctors.



For more on your rights:

What About Insurance

Insurance can be challenging for people living with HIV, but progress is being made. The IATF is actively advocating for change. In the meantime, here are some important tips:

- Keep any policies you had before your diagnosis.
- Be honest—concealing your status on a health questionnaire can void coverage.
- Some policies (like disability insurance) may be unavailable, but many others are available with exclusions or surcharges.
- The field is improving, so always check for updated information.

For detailed info on insurance options and cost-saving tips



What If I Face Discrimination

You have the same right to treatment, dignity, and respect as anyone else. Unfortunately, stigma still lags behind medical progress, and even healthcare workers sometimes act unfairly.

Under no circumstances may a healthcare provider refuse to treat you, schedule your appointment at the end of the day, claim that “special disinfection is required” (that’s false!), disclose your HIV status, flag you or your medical file in any special way, or do anything that distinguishes you from any other patient.

Faced discrimination? Contact our community support coordinator at 054-3200071.

It's Easier Together

Living with HIV is an ongoing process, and Processing emotions and questions makes a difference.

The IATF psychosocial support system offers free one-on-one therapy for up to one year.

Therapy can support your personal growth and make a major difference in adjusting after diagnosis—we highly recommend giving it a try.

For more information on community support



Be part of a Community

Our community engagement program complements emotional support with a social network of people living with HIV. Sometimes, hearing from others who've walked this path is priceless.

There are many ways to become part of the community: joining secret Facebook group, monthly in-person meetups, conferences, and a 3-month Buddy Program where trained long-term HIV-positive peers offer guidance after diagnosis.

Be part of a Community

We invite you to download the Plus app for the positive community and benefit from a variety of tools and resources:

- Articles, videos, and updates
- Health calculators for vaccines and screening
- Medication and appointment reminders
- Directory of HIV-friendly professionals
- Topical chat groups

All the pluses in one place!

All these services are just a message away.
Contact our community coordinator on **054-3200071**.

There's Always Room for Questions

This booklet provides you with the essential information you need to know. However, living with HIV may raise additional questions—some you may have already asked yourself, and others will arise in the future.

We've gathered reflection questions that may help you identify areas to improve your quality of life while living with HIV

- Have you shared your HIV status with people around you?
- Do you have support systems to talk about your life with HIV?
- Have you avoided romantic or social relationships since your diagnosis?
- Are you concerned about your alcohol, tobacco, or drug use, or would you like to manage it differently?
- Do you feel comfortable asking your doctor for STI screening?
- Would you change anything to improve your care (Doctor, clinic, medication, treatment approach, etc) as a person living with HIV?

If you feel moved to take action to make your life easier, it's possible.

For medical issues, speak with your physician. For rights, support, or connection to others living with HIV, we are here to help.

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