



Choices and responsibilities

for HIV positive people





Being HIV positive

Finding out you are HIV-positive may be a shock but there are choices you can make to help you live a full and healthy life. You can remain sexually active, continue working, be involved in sport and have children.

Along with the right to these choices you also have a responsibility, morally and legally, not to put anyone else at risk of getting HIV.

There is a list of places at the back of this pamphlet where you can get more information and help with any concerns. These agencies can also provide contact with support groups, counsellors and doctors.

Health

Choice: A person with HIV has the same rights to appropriate care and treatment as anyone with a serious illness. You should have a doctor you trust and feel comfortable with, as you may need to see them regularly.

You also need to stay as healthy as possible, so a good diet and regular exercise are both important. Ideally, quit smoking and reduce your alcohol and other recreational drug use.

It is important to have a good support network. A natural reaction may be to become anxious and depressed, so you may need someone you trust to talk to.

To stay healthy, it's a good idea to talk with your doctor about getting vaccinated against some infections such as the flu, and hepatitis A and B. However some other vaccinations are not recommended for people with HIV.

Responsibility: If you need medical attention, you should tell your doctor and dentist that you have HIV so they can ensure that you receive the right treatment.

If you are thinking of donating blood, sperm or any other body tissue or organ, you need to discuss this with your doctor.

Home

Choice: You can live quite safely with other people including sharing the kitchen and bathroom as usual. You can't get HIV just by living with someone who is HIV positive.

Responsibility: Family members, housemates and friends are not at risk unless you have unsafe sex or blood-to-blood contact with them. Never share razors, toothbrushes or anything else that could have your blood on it. Be extra careful with blood spills and clean them thoroughly.



Work

Choice: You can still work, and no-one can discriminate against you because you have HIV.

Responsibility: There are a small number of jobs where your HIV status may affect what you can do or the way you work (for example, where there is regular exposure to blood or other bodily fluids). The support groups listed can help you find out if your HIV will affect your work.

Leisure and sport

Choice: You can participate as usual in sport and leisure activities.

Responsibility: You may have heard of the 'blood rule' in sport. This means if you get cut or bleed in any way while playing sport, stop playing until the bleeding ceases and the wound is cleaned and well covered.

Sex

Choice: You can still have a satisfying sex life.

Responsibility: You have a responsibility to protect others from HIV. You must tell your sex partner that you have HIV **before** you have sex, and always use a condom and lubricant when having sex. If something does go wrong and you have unsafe sex or if the condom breaks, there are special anti-HIV drugs that may lower the risk of your partner getting HIV. These drugs (PEP or *post-exposure prophylaxis*) need to be taken as soon as possible and within 72 hours of having sex (phone 1300 767 161 for advice and referral).

Having unsafe sex can also put you at risk of getting other infections.

Children

Choice: You can still have children if you wish.

Responsibility: HIV positive **men and women** who want to have children need to talk to a specialist doctor **before** trying to have a baby. There are ways of lowering the chance of **both your partner and your baby** getting HIV.

Drugs

Choice: If you choose to take recreational and illegal drugs they can have harmful effects on your health and there may be legal implications. There is less risk of HIV transmission if you swallow, smoke, snort, sniff or use suppositories to take drugs instead of injecting the drug.

Responsibility: If you inject drugs **never** share needles or syringes. If you must share injecting equipment this may put you at risk of getting other infections. Before you share equipment with others, you must tell them that you have HIV. There are cleaning precautions you should take for shared injecting equipment.

If you snort drugs or use suppositories with others, use your own equipment (such as a straw or suppository applicator) and keep it for your use only.

PEP or *post-exposure prophylaxis* may help prevent someone getting HIV in the case of an accident or injury involving a needle with HIV positive blood. PEP drugs need to be taken as soon as possible and within 72 hours of the injury (phone 1300 767 161 for advice and referral).



Law

Choice: By law, you can't be discriminated against or treated differently from others in the areas of work, housing and the provision of goods and services.

With very few exceptions, no one can tell others about your HIV status. If you think you have been treated differently or that your privacy has been broken, you can get help from the places listed at the back of this brochure.

Responsibility: By law, the Department of Health has to protect the public from certain infectious diseases, including HIV. The Department's Case Management Program exists to help HIV-positive people who put others at risk of infection. They have the legal power to stop these people from acting in an unsafe way.

If you know you have HIV and you infect another person, then you can be charged by the police with Grievous Bodily Harm. This includes having unsafe sex or sharing needles and not telling your partner you have HIV. If found guilty, you could go to jail for several years.

Support

Western Australian AIDS Council (Inc.)

(08) 9482 0000

Website: www.waaidns.com

National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS

1800 259 666

Website: www.napwa.org.au

WA Substance Users' Association (WASUA)

(08) 9321 2877

Website: www.wasua.com.au

Haemophilia Foundation of WA

(08) 9420 7294

Website: www.hfwa.org

Magenta (sex worker organisation)

(08) 9328 1387

Website: www.fpwa.org.au/services/magenta



SARC (Sexual Assault Resource Centre)

(08) 9340 1828

Website: www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/services/sarc

Health and medical information

Your General Practitioner, doctor or medical service of your choice:

FPWA (Sexual Health Services)

(08) 9227 6177

(Country callers 1800 198 205)

Royal Perth Hospital, Sexual Health Clinic

(08) 9224 2178 (8:30am–4pm, Mon–Fri)

Royal Perth Hospital Immunology Triage Nurse

(08) 9224 3357

Fremantle Hospital, Infectious Diseases and Sexual Health Service

(08) 9431 2149 (9am–4pm, Mon–Fri)

Website: www.fhhs.health.wa.gov.au (follow links to infectious diseases service)

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service

(08) 9421 3888 – East Perth

(08) 9344 0444 – Mirrabooka

(08) 9452 5333 – Maddington

Website: www.derbarlyerrigan.com.au

PEP Line

1300 767 161 (24-hour advice and referral)

Other

Equal Opportunity Commission

(08) 9216 3900

(Country callers 1800 198 149)

Health Consumers' Council

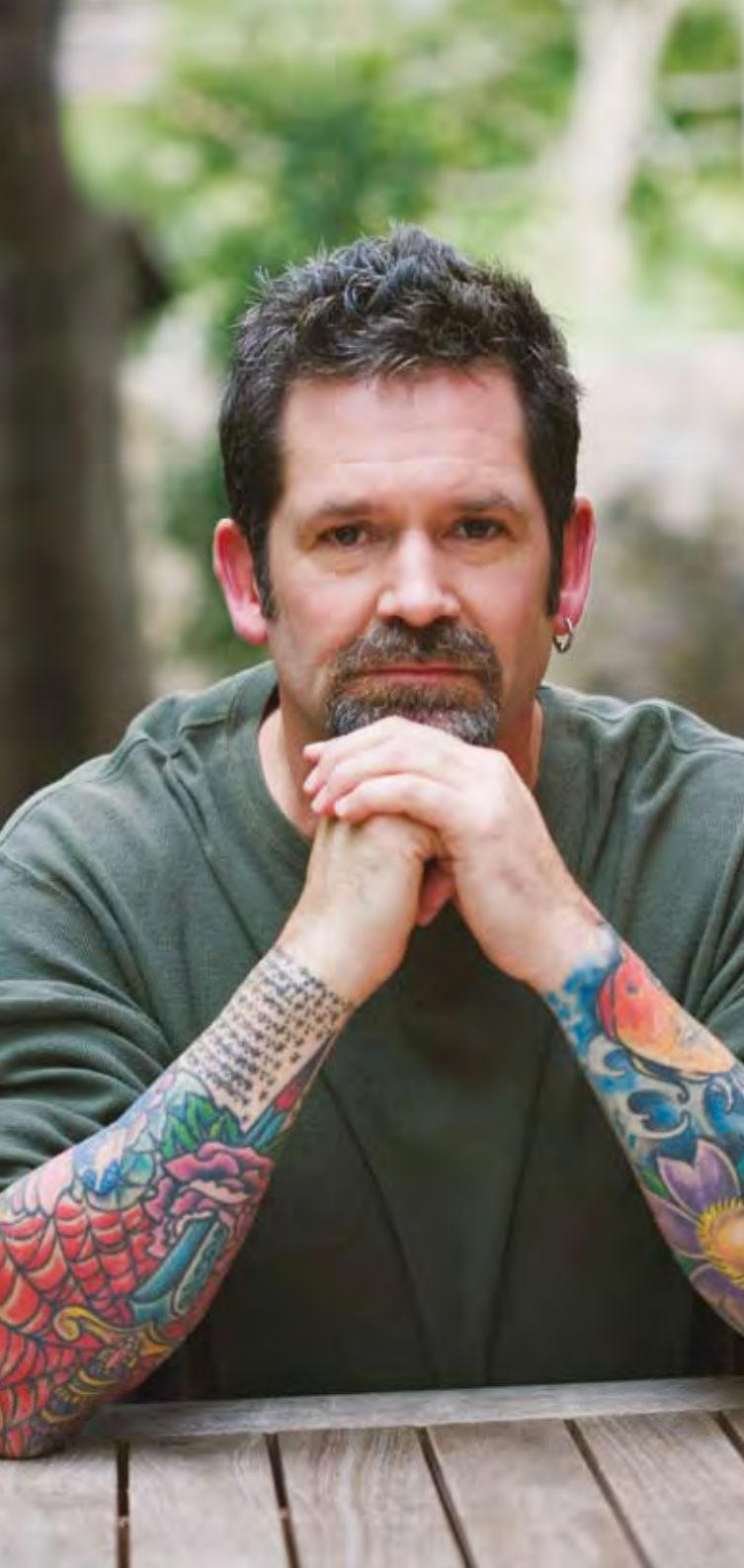
(08) 9221 3422

Legal Aid Commission

1300 650 579

Aboriginal Legal Service of WA

1800 019 900



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