

# BENEFITS OF ARV TREATMENT



## INTRODUCTION

Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is the treatment for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection using a combination of Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. ARV drugs do not 'kill' HIV virus but prevents HIV virus from multiplying and destroying infection fighting CD4 (soldier of the body) cells. CD4 cell are an important part of the immune system because they fight germs and infection. This helps the body fight off life threatening infections and cancer. Although the anti-HIV medication cannot cure HIV infection but ARV stops the HIV virus causing damage to the body. Early detection of HIV and starting ARV immediately will lead to a good life. Studies shows that people with HIV live much longer due to ARV than those who are not taking ARVs. If you have been taking HIV medication (ARV drugs) consistently, your viral load will be very low or undetectable, this will eventually mean that you will not pass/transmit HIV to your sexual partners and children during pregnancy, child-birth and breast feeding.

# I JUST TESTED HIV POSITIVE. DO I NEED TO START TREATMENT?

Once diagnosed as HIV+ you may need to start treatment right away. Early treatment is recommended as it reduces/prevents spreading of the HIV virus to other people.

When you start ARV your overall health will improve. You are unlikely to transmit HIV after your viral load is suppressed or undetectable. Undetectable viral load means you're still HIV+ but your viral load is below 40 copies when using a standard viral load test.

*When you  
start ARV your  
overall health  
will improve.*



## IF I TEST HIV+ NOW, WILL I ALWAYS TEST HIV+?

YES! There is no cure for HIV. Because you have HIV virus in your body you will always test HIV positive. However, ARV medication can keep you healthy and protects you from AIDS related illnesses.

The only time you may not test HIV +ve is when you have an undetectable viral load as the virus will be so low in your blood that a test may not pick it up, but this does not mean that you don't have HIV. Even if you have an HIV undetectable viral load your HIV test will still be positive and a small amount of HIV will be hiding in your body. Remember, there is no cure for HIV but you can live a long and healthy life on ARV Treatment.

## HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN TO START ARV?

You may begin treatment immediately after being confirmed positive for HIV. A study suggests all people living with HIV regardless of your CD4 count should start ARV immediately after diagnosis. You must also be prepared to make a lifelong commitment, because you have to take your treatment every day with strict adherence to treatment schedule.



# HOW WILL I KNOW WHICH ARV MEDICATION TO TAKE?

The best combination of ARV medication for you depends on your individual needs. Factors that you and your doctor will consider when selecting your HIV regimen include:

- New HIV treatments have few side effects and easy to take daily.
- Other disease or health conditions you may already have (including TB infection, Kidney, Liver problem, Hepatitis B, etc.).
- Possible side effects of the ARV medications
- How ARV medication may interact with other medications you are currently taking
- Your drug resistance testing results

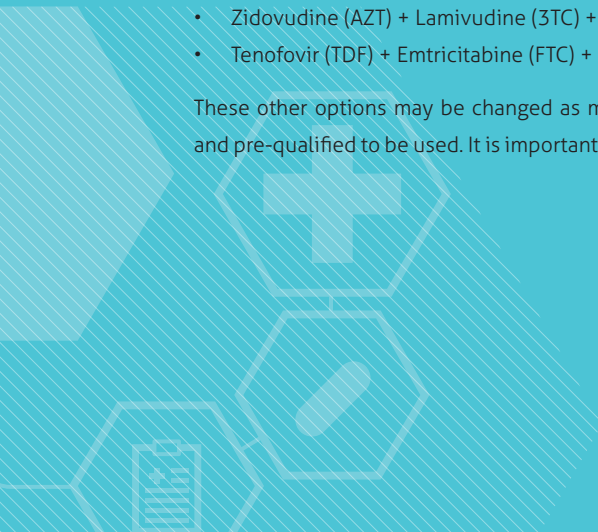
After considering your individual needs, you and your doctor may select one of the following regimens recommended for people taking ARV medications for the first time:

Most people should start Tenofovir (TDF) + Lamivudine (3TC) + Dolutegravir (DTG)- it is the best treatment used worldwide

Others options available are;

- Tenofovir (TDF) + Lamivudine (3TC) + Efavirenz (EFV)
- Zidovudine (AZT) + Lamivudine (3TC) + Efavirenz (EFV)
- Tenofovir (TDF) + Emtricitabine (FTC) + Efavirenz (EFV)

These other options may be changed as more effective drugs are developed and pre-qualified to be used. It is important to regularly check with your doctor.







*Side effects that become unbearable or life threatening calls for a change in medications.*

## WILL I HAVE SIDE EFFECTS FROM THE **ARV MEDICATIONS** IN MY REGIMEN?

The ARV medications can cause side effects. It varies depending on the ARV medication. People taking the same medication may not have the same side effects. Before starting treatment, discuss possible side effects with your doctor.

Most side effects from ARV medications are manageable. Dolutegravir is very well tolerated. Some people have side-effects when they start treatment but they settle in a few weeks. However, side effects that become unbearable or life threatening calls for a change in medications. Side effects that may seem minor, such as fever, nausea, fatigue, or rash, can indicate serious problems. Once you start treatment, always discuss any side effects from you ARV medication with your doctor.

**Most side effects subside by 6-8 weeks after initiation of ARV as they are temporary.**

Name of ARV Drugs	Side Effects/Toxicity
Abacavir (ABC)	<p>Hypersensitivity (allergic) reaction – fever; rash; nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, or stomach pain; generally ill feeling, extreme tiredness, or aches; shortness of breath, cough, or sore throat. (any 2 of these symptoms appear, contact your doctor and stop taking ABC)</p> <p>The above usually appears first 6 weeks of starting therapy.</p>
Atazanavir/ritonavir (ATV/r)	Abnormalities in your ECG, Clinical jaundice, Kidney stones
Zidovudine (AZT)	Severe anaemia, Lactic acidosis or severe, Enlarged liver
Dolutegravir (DTG)	Liver damage, Hypersensitivity (allergic) reactions
Efavirenz (EFV)	Dizziness, Insomnia, Abnormal dreams, Mental symptoms, (anxiety, depression, hallucinations, mental confusion), Memory loss
Lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r)	Abnormalities in your ECG, Liver damage, Pancreatitis, Dyslipidaemia, Diarrhoea
Nevirapine (NVP)	Liver damage, Severe skin rash and hypersensitivity reaction, including Stevens-Johnson Syndrome
Tenofovir (TDF)	Chronic kidney disease, Decrease in bone mineral density, Lactic acidosis



# TREATMENT FOR HIV

Anti-Retro Viral Treatment fights HIV-AIDS and literally brings people back, who are near death

Clinic contact details			
Country	Name of Clinic	Physical Location	Phone Contact
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	Pohnpei State Hospital Chuuk State Hospital Kosrae State Hospital Yap State Memorial Hospital	Pohnpei State Chuuk State Kosrae State Yap State	N/A
Kiribati	HIV Unit, MHMS	Bikenibeu, Iakun Melad	75228874
Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)	STI Clinic	Room 57, (Old Surgical Ward)	(692) 4550132 (692) 4552538 (692) 4552150
Samoa	Communicable Disease Clinic	Moto'otua	685 – 66700
Tonga	Communicable Disease Clinic, Public Health	Vaiola Hospital, Tofoa, Nukualofa	23200 ext: 1344
Republic of Nauru	HIV/STI Unit	Naoero Public Health Center	(674) 557 3930 (674) 558 4898
Niue	Niue Foou Hospital	Kaimiti, Alofi	(683) 4100
Cook Islands	Rarotonga Hospital	Rarotonga	(682) 22664
Palau	Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) Clinic	Meyuns, Koror	680-488-2450/3117
	Health Information Resource Center	Medalaii, Koror	680-488-1757/6500
Tuvalu	Princess Margaret Hospital	Fakaifou Side Funafuti	(688) 20480
Vanuatu	Norsup Hospital, ANC Lamap HC Liro HC Utas HC Nebul HC	Malampa Province	N/A
	NPH ANC Tasmalum HC Tassiriki HC Avunatarie HC Fanafo HC	Sanma Province	N/A
	Sola HC	Torba Province	N/A
	Lenakel hospital ANC	Tafea Province	N/A
	VCH ANC	Shefa Province	N/A

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For more information, please visit your nearest health center and/or HUB clinic.



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Resilient nations.