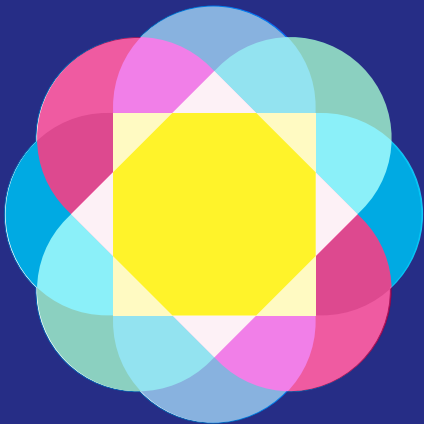


**i-base**

**Pocket size**

# ART



**January 2017**

This leaflet  
is about HIV  
treatment  
(ART).

It is for  
anyone who  
wants to  
know more.

“I know I was really unlucky to catch HIV. I was diagnosed after one low-risk experience.

But I knew immediately that I wanted to start treatment.

Learning and understanding how ART works and then deciding to use it was an important part of how I chose to move forward.”

- Lenny

## Does ART really work?

Yes.

- It is better for your health.
- Life expectancy will be similar to before you were positive.
- It also reduces risk to your partners.

[i-base.info/PARTNER-study](http://i-base.info/PARTNER-study)

More than 17 million people are now on treatment globally.

ART works for adults and children, for women, men and transgender people.

It works no matter how you were infected. Whether this was sexually, by injecting drugs, at birth, by using blood or blood products.

Taking ART exactly as prescribed reduces the virus in your body to tiny amounts (called “undetectable”).

Even though you will still be HIV positive you can live a long and healthy life.

**Do all HIV  
positive people  
need ART?**



**Mostly, yes.**

**This is new.**

ART is now routinely recommended for everyone in UK, US and WHO guidelines.

Treatment works and it is easy to take. ART often involves only one or two pills a day.

When not on ART, the virus can damage your health even when you feel well.

You can  
choose when  
to begin ART.

You can choose  
which meds are  
likely to best  
fit your life.

You can also  
change meds later  
if you need to,  
to get ART right.

[i-base.info/ART-choice](http://i-base.info/ART-choice)

## Which ART?

You and your doctor decide which meds are best for you.

Most people get this right first time. But it is easy to change meds if you get side effects from one of the drugs.

[i-base.info/side-effects](http://i-base.info/side-effects)



“Get involved in choosing your treatment.

It needs to fit to your life, schedules and routines as much as possible.”

- Xavi

## adherence

Adherence is the most important thing you have to think about when you start ART.

If you are worried, there are lots of ways to help.

Getting into a routine makes it easier.

Often this might be just one pill a day.

# 98%

... of people starting ART in a large international study had an undetectable viral load after a year of treatment.

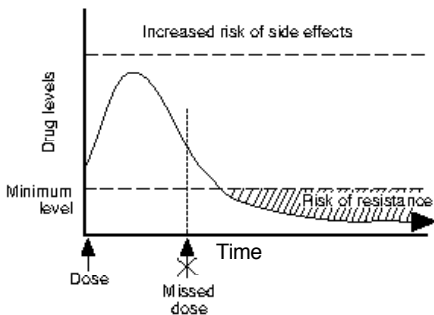
The results showed that early ART is safe and effective.

They showed that daily ART worked for thousands of people from very different backgrounds.

It is easy for your meds to just become a regular part of life.

[i-base.info/START-study](http://i-base.info/START-study)

## Adherence is important because a missed or late dose increases the risk of drug resistance



Being late with your meds lets the drug levels fall to where resistance can develop. The more often you are late, the greater the chance of resistance. *Never double-dose if you miss a dose though.*

# What else...?

This leaflet only answers a few questions about ART.

The full version of this booklet has more info about choice of meds, adherence, getting on with your doctor, side effects, changes in the NHS, getting support and learning about your health.

i-Base can post you this booklet or you can read everything online.

[i-base.info/ART](http://i-base.info/ART)

We also answer questions by phone, email and online.

[i-base.info/qa](http://i-base.info/qa)



## Tests to monitor your health

### CD4 count

- Your CD4 count tells you about your immune system.
- The range for HIV negative adults is about 400 to 1600. Getting above 500 is considered normal.
- Even with a very low CD4 count, ART can help your immune system recover.

### Viral load (VL)

- This test shows how much virus is in a sample of blood.
- On ART, viral load should be less than 50 copies/mL.
- This is called undetectable and it makes HIV difficult to transmit.

**more info**

**i-base.info**

**0808 800 6013**

[i-base.info/references](http://i-base.info/references)

# **Feedback**

[surveymonkey.com/r/  
BBZPMFH](https://surveymonkey.com/r/BBZPMFH)

i-Base, London, SE1 3LJ.

[More pages >>>](#)

“It is an exciting time for HIV care...

ART is now the routine next step after finding out you are HIV positive.

Taking control over this aspect of your health can be one of the easiest ways to deal with HIV.

You can then carry on with your life.”

– Simon