

People living with HIV

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The advent of contemporary antiretroviral therapy (ART), Non-Occupational Post Exposure Prophylaxis (NPEP), Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and recognition of "U=U" (undetectable equals untransmissible) signifies a shift in the understanding around the risk of HIV transmission. HIV in the current era is a chronic, manageable condition. With engagement in appropriate HIV care, adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) and a subsequent sustained undetectable HIV viral load, an individual living with HIV cannot transmit HIV to an HIV-negative partner.

This differs for a new HIV diagnosis or someone without a sustained undetectable HIV viral load who may be able to transmit HIV, most often unknowingly. In such circumstances, contact tracing is required. Contact tracing considerations include the index patient's preference for confidentiality around their diagnosis and NPEP for any recently exposed HIV-negative partners.

A discussion with the index patient as to their preferred method of contact tracing is essential in the first instance, with a referral to a specialist contact tracing service if the patient wishes or the index patient is unable to be contacted by the clinician.

Reference:

U=U: ASHM Guidance For Healthcare Professionals available at: <https://www.ashm.org.au/resources/uu-ashm-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals/>

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Developing a sustainable
HIV, Viral Hepatitis and
Sexual Health Workforce

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