## What help is available to cover HIV-related health care costs?

CAREAssist, Oregon's AIDS Drug Assistance Program, can help pay for care and treatment for eligible Oregonians living with HIV.

If you have health insurance, CAREAssist can cover deductibles, copayments and coinsurance costs.

If you do not have insurance, CAREAssist can help you sign up for insurance and provide emergency coverage for HIV-related medical visits, lab work and medications.

Call 1-800-805-2313 to see if you are eligible and learn more at: healthoregon.org/careassist

## What services are available for people living with HIV/AIDS?

Services are available for people living with HIV/AIDS through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, named for a young AIDS activist who fought discrimination and fear surrounding HIV/AIDS in the 1980s.

**You are eligible if:**

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| You are living with HIV/AIDS |
| Your income is within the limit (income limits vary by program) |
| You live in Oregon |

**You may qualify for assistance with the following services:**

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|---|---|
| HIV case management | Drug and alcohol treatment/ counseling |
| Health insurance | Housing |
| Prescription drugs | Transportation |
| Medical care | Food |
| Dental care | Utilities |
| Mental health counseling | |

HIV case managers provide information and referrals and help coordinate care for people living with HIV. The information you share with your case manager is kept confidential. Find an HIV case manager in your area at: healthoregon.org/hiv

## Additional Resources

Learn about how Oregon is working to end the epidemic at: endhivoregon.org

Get answers to your questions about HIV, how to protect yourself and where to get tested by calling the National AIDS Hotline at:
1-800-232-4636 (English and Spanish)
1-888-232-6348 (TTY)

Information adapted from AIDSinfo: *https://hivinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv/fact-sheets*

This document can be provided upon request in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request this publication in another format or language, email care.assist@dhsoha.state.or.us or call 971-673-0153 (voice) or 971-673-0372 (TTY).

endhivoregon.org

OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY

END HIV

English (1/2025)

Frequently Asked Questions:

# HIV/AIDS

END HIV

## What is HIV/AIDS?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes HIV infection. AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) is the most advanced stage of HIV infection.

HIV attacks the infection-fighting cells of the immune system. The destruction of these cells makes it difficult for the body to protect against infections and certain cancers. Without treatment, HIV can gradually destroy the immune system and progress to AIDS.

## How is HIV spread?

HIV is spread only in certain body fluids from a person with HIV who has a detectable viral load (enough virus in the blood that a test can identify it). A person with HIV cannot sexually transmit HIV if they have an undetectable viral load (an extremely low amount of virus in the blood as a result of treatment).

**Body fluids that can spread HIV are:**

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| Blood |
| Sexual fluids—semen, pre-seminal fluid, vaginal fluid, rectal fluid |
| Breast milk |

**In the U.S., HIV is mainly spread by:**

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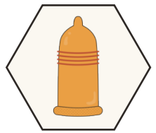
| Having condomless anal or vaginal sex without taking medicine to prevent HIV (if HIV negative) or taking medicine to effectively treat HIV (if HIV positive) |
| Sharing injection drug equipment, such as needles, with someone who has HIV |

## What are some ways to help prevent the spread of HIV?



**Condoms**
Use a latex or polyurethane condom or dental dam with every sex partner, every time. Water- or silicone-based lubricants can increase comfort and prevent breakage, but don't use lubes with oil in them (like Vaseline or most massage oils).

**Safer Injection**
If you inject drugs, do not share equipment including cookers, cottons and water. Use a new sterile syringe every time you inject to prevent transmission of diseases like HIV and hepatitis C. Find a local syringe exchange at: healthoregon.org/hivprevention

**Treatment**
If you are living with HIV, you can eliminate the chance of sexually transmitting HIV to others by taking daily HIV treatment, as prescribed. This will help you achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load. Find information about the Oregon care and treatment program at: healthoregon.org/hiv

**STI Screening**
Having an untreated sexually transmitted infection (STI) can mean you are more likely to get HIV. The same activities that result in an STI put you at risk for HIV, and an untreated STI makes it easier for HIV to infect your body. Not all STIs will have symptoms. Regular screening can help ensure an STI is treated quickly, reducing your risk of getting HIV. Find testing near you at: gettested.cdc.gov

**PrEP and PEP**
If you are HIV negative, take PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis). PrEP is a daily pill that reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99%. Among people who inject drugs, PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV by at least 74% when taken daily. Local PrEP providers: oraetc.org/prep

PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) means taking medication to prevent infection within 72 hours after a possible exposure to HIV. PEP is for emergency situations. If you think you've recently been exposed to HIV during sex, by sharing needles and works to prepare drugs, or from being sexually assaulted, ask your health care provider or an ER doctor about PEP.

## What is the treatment for HIV?

Oregonians with HIV are living longer, healthier lives with the help of HIV medications. HIV treatment lowers the amount of the virus in the blood, keeps the immune system strong and prevents HIV infection from advancing to AIDS. People living with HIV who take medications as prescribed and maintain an undetectable viral load cannot pass on HIV to sex partners. Taking HIV medications during pregnancy also prevents transmission of HIV to the child.