



NORTHREACH

April 2020


Aware Newsletter


Hello and welcome to Northreach’s first Aware Newsletter! This newsletter aims to keep you up to date on the latest education and research on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This month we will focus on HIV and COVID-19.

Most HIV specialists are advising that individuals living with HIV should follow the same precautions as those without HIV.


HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

CLEAN HANDS SAVE LIVES







Avoid shaking hands while sick




Avoid hugging or kissing others while sick




Avoid close contact with people and public assemblies while sick




Avoid touching eyes and mouth until able to wash or sanitise hands



Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



Use an alcohol based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available




When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the inside of your hand




Stay home and avoid contact with others while sick

FIRST




Wet hands




Apply soap


THEN



Rub vigorously for 20 seconds, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers




Rinse hands with warm water ... leave water running



Dry hands thoroughly with hand-dryer or paper towel if available

FINALLY




Turn off tap with a clean paper towel if available





Clean hands!



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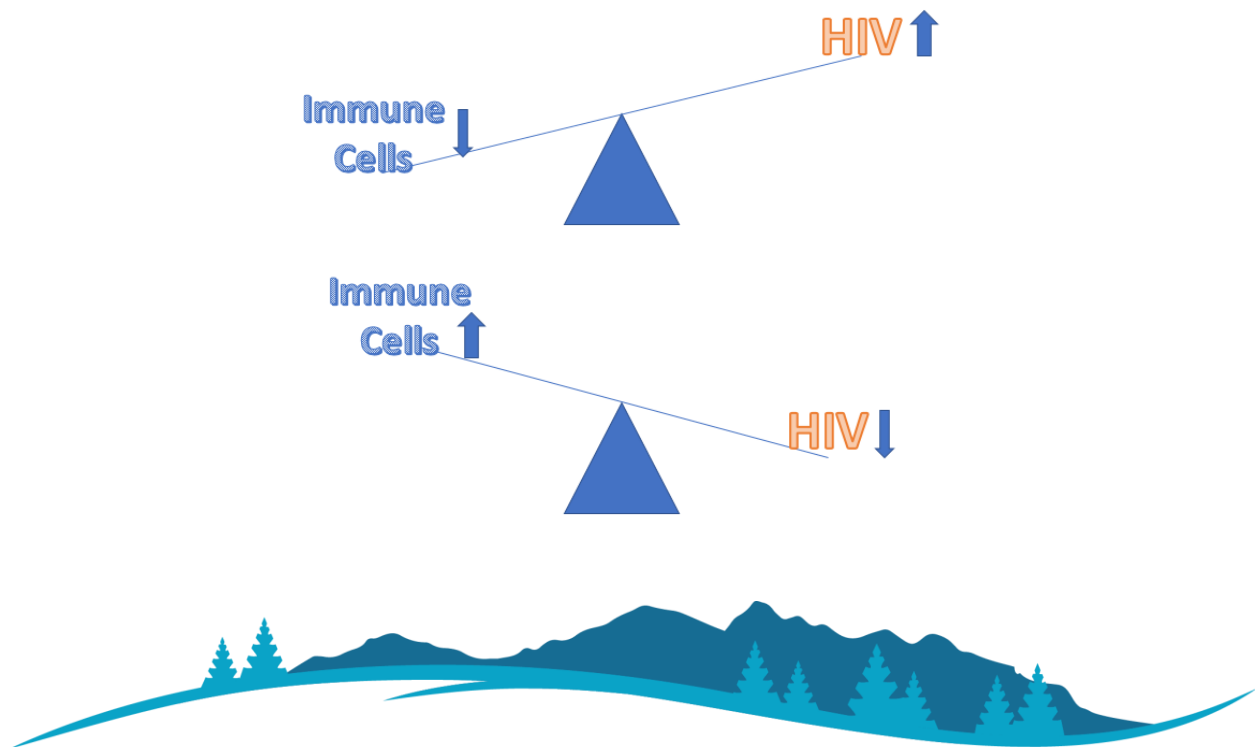
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Another recommendation for those living with HIV is to continue to keep their viral load as low as possible, or at the undetectable level. Some good sources for COVID-19 information as it relates to HIV can be found at the following links:


- <https://www.thebody.com/health/hiv-coronavirus-covid-19>
- <https://www.catie.ca/en/catieneews/2020-03-17/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-hiv-and-hepatitis-c-what-you-need-know>



What is a viral load?

When HIV enters the human body, it duplicates itself in immune system cells. The level at which it has duplicated is called a *viral load*. If an individual has a high viral load, that means they have a large amount of the HIV virus in their body. When the virus has duplicated itself in the immune system cells, those cells can no longer do their job, which is to keep us healthy. In the opposite way, when the duplication of HIV is slowed down, there will be a lower level of the virus in the body. If there is a lower level of the virus, then there will be more unaffected immune system cells to keep us healthy. This can be thought of the balancing act of a teeter totter.



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What does it mean to keep your viral load undetectable?

When HIV medications (antiretrovirals) are taken consistently as prescribed, it will slow the duplication of HIV in the immune system cells. When following the medication treatment plan, the level of the virus becomes so low, it reaches an *undetectable* level. At this undetectable level, there are more strong immune system cells that can work to keep the body healthy. Another extremely beneficial aspect of keeping the viral load at the undetectable level is at this level, there can be no transmission of HIV from one person to another. It is important to follow a treatment plan when living with HIV. Doing so not only keeps the person living with HIV healthy, but also keeps others safe and healthy too!





Newsletter information sourced from:

- <https://www.catie.ca/>
- <https://www.thebodypro.com/>
- <https://nntac.org.au/>
- <https://ninecircles.ca/news-events/uu-the-most-important-equation-in-hiv-science-today/>



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