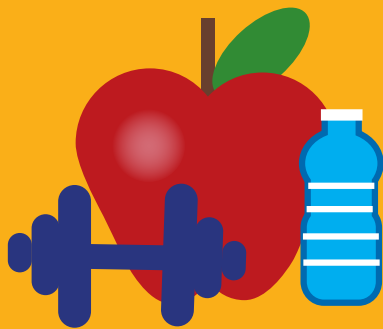


SELF-CARE TIPS FOR HIV ADVOCATES

HIV advocacy can be hard work. It often involves confronting difficult and emotionally charged issues—such as stigma, discrimination and loss—which can lead to exhaustion or burnout. The practice of self-care can help HIV advocates maintain emotional resilience and be more effective in their efforts to bring about positive change in the HIV community. Check out these self-care tips:



Nourish your body. Exercise regularly, eat well-balanced meals, stay hydrated and get enough rest. Taking care of your body will increase your energy, improve your mood and boost your immune function.



Practice relaxation. Try mindfulness meditation, deep-breathing exercises or yoga to reduce stress and calm the mind, which will help center you amid challenging work.



Set boundaries. You can't be an effective advocate if you're burned out. Know your limits and establish clear boundaries to ensure you have time for yourself.



Celebrate your progress. Advocacy can be an uphill battle, but it's important to acknowledge the small victories along the way toward achieving your goals. Celebrating even minor successes can provide motivation and a sense of purpose.



Unplug when needed.

Take a break from the news, social media or other sources of information if they are angering or frustrating you. Be mindful of how much time you spend online and the type of content you're consuming.



Acknowledge your emotions.

It's OK to express your emotions, including sadness, frustration or grief. Ignoring your feelings can negatively affect your mental and physical health.



Pursue your passions.

Engage in activities or hobbies that bring you joy and help you unwind, such as painting, gardening, reading or cooking.



Find support.

Seek supportive friends, colleagues or a mentor. Talking to others who understand the emotional challenges of HIV advocacy can provide solace.



Visit [POZ.com/advocacy](https://www.poz.com/advocacy) for more on HIV advocacy.

If your test result is **negative** (**non-reactive**)

When it comes to HIV **prevention**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that ALL sexually active adults and adolescents be informed about PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis). PrEP means routinely taking prescription medicine before you're exposed to HIV to help reduce your chances of getting it. **Here are some steps you can take for yourself and your sexual partner(s):**

1

Talk to your healthcare provider

Have a conversation with your healthcare provider about all of your HIV prevention options, including PrEP.

2

Find out everything you can

Scan the QR codes and explore resources on your own to get tips on how to be proactive about protecting your sexual health, including understanding your HIV prevention options, like PrEP medications.

3

Maintain your sexual health

Regularly test for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), use condoms, and communicate honestly with your partner(s). If you have been prescribed PrEP, continue to take it exactly as prescribed.

Whatever your **results** may be...

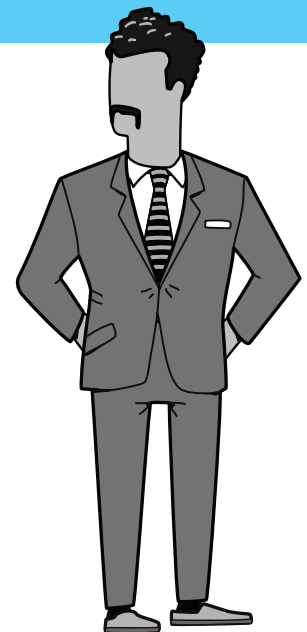
Speak with a healthcare provider:

1. How can I help protect myself and others?
2. How often should I get tested and retested?
3. How can I talk to my partner(s) about my status and theirs?

Share your status with partner(s)

It may not be easy, but having a conversation with your partner(s) about your HIV status can help:

- Normalize the conversation around status, sexual health, and testing
- Empower others to make informed decisions about their sexual health
- Encourage all people to have conversations and stay engaged with their healthcare providers



If your test result is **positive** (**reactive**)

Today, it's recommended that people living with HIV start **treatment** as soon as possible. Starting and staying on today's treatment can help you get to and stay at an undetectable status and prevent transmission of HIV to others through sex. **Here are some steps you can take for yourself and your sexual partner(s):**

1

Talk to your healthcare provider

Ask what your test results mean for you and find out about HIV treatments that could best fit your personal routine.

2

Find out everything you can

The more you know about HIV, the better. You can discover resources by scanning the QR codes, or even find helpful information on your own.

3

Maintain your sexual health

Use condoms, practice safer sex, and start and stay on the treatment discussed with your healthcare provider.

Helpful terms to know

TasP

Treatment as Prevention

If you're living with HIV, current research shows that taking HIV treatment as prescribed and getting to and staying undetectable prevents transmitting HIV to others through sex. **This is also known as U=U (undetectable=untransmittable).**

PrEP

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) means routinely taking prescription medicine **before you're exposed to HIV** to help reduce your chances of getting it. There are different PrEP options available, some of which are 99% effective. Just remember, PrEP doesn't protect against other STIs, so be sure to use condoms and other healthy sex practices.

Undetectable

A major goal of HIV treatment is getting your viral load to undetectable. Undetectable means that there is so little virus in the blood that a lab test can't measure it. If you have questions about your lab results and what it means to be undetectable, talk with your healthcare provider.



We can all fight against HIV

No matter what your HIV test results may be, staying educated on how to take care of yourself and your partner(s) is a key step to living a longer and healthier life.



Model portra

Resources for you



HEALTHYSEXUAL[®]

www.Healthysexuals.com

Visit the link above for more information and educational resources about **PrEP**.



STOP THE VIRUS.

www.HelpStopTheVirus.com

Visit the link above for more information and educational resources about **HIV treatment**.



STOP THE VIRUS.

If you are living with HIV, talk to your healthcare provider about treatment options.