



Key Messages

1. **Treatment provides health benefits.**

The first and most important goal of HIV treatment is to improve the health and well-being of all people living with HIV. Early diagnosis and early initiation of treatment play key roles in achieving this goal.

2. **U=U has the potential to change what it means to live with HIV.**

The U=U message has the potential to change the way people with HIV, their friends, their families, and their coworkers think and talk about viral suppression and what it means to live with HIV.

3. **No one must be left behind.**

Support must be in place to help those people living with HIV who may experience challenges to accessing and taking treatment as prescribed. We must address the barriers to achieving and maintaining an undetectable viral load that people may face. These barriers disproportionately affect many groups, including Black, Latinx, and transgender persons, men who have sex with men, people who use or inject drugs, non-English language speakers, and undocumented persons. No one must be left behind.

4. **People with an undetectable viral load can't pass HIV through sex.**

When a person achieves and maintains a viral load of less than 200 copies/ml of blood, they cannot transmit HIV sexually, regardless of whether or not they use a condom.

5. **Viral load does not equal value.**

There are legitimate concerns that the U=U message sets up a system in which a person's value is determined by their viral load. We must avoid creating two classes of people with HIV, those who have an undetectable viral load and those who do not. Everyone living with HIV, regardless of viral load, has the right to full and healthy social, sexual, and reproductive lives.

6. **Helping with harm reduction.**

The evidence for U=U only pertains currently to HIV transmission through sex. Sexually transmitted and other blood-borne infections will not be prevented by HIV treatment and people should consider a combination of sexual health strategies, including condom use, when they have sex. And while research suggests that having an undetectable viral load can greatly reduce the risk of HIV transmission during pregnancy and childbirth, through breastfeeding/ chestfeeding, or through sharing injection drug use equipment, there is not sufficient evidence to say there is no risk of transmission. Work with your patients to provide the services and guidance that works best for them and their circumstances.

7. **U=U can help end HIV-related stigma and discrimination.**

U=U is one of the best tools we have to dismantle HIV-related stigma and discrimination. There is no reason why people living with HIV should experience externally or internally imposed stigma.