

Sharing Your HIV Status

After you are diagnosed with HIV, you will have to decide whether to share that information with other people. It is **very important** that you talk to your current and past sexual partners about your HIV status. If you have shared needles with others to inject drugs, you need to tell them too.



If you are afraid or embarrassed to tell them yourself, the health department in your area can notify your sexual or needle-sharing partners that they may have been exposed to HIV without giving your name.



Telling others that you are HIV positive can be a tough process, but you don't have to face it alone. Talk to your healthcare provider and ask for help in finding support groups or other people who can help you.



Sharing your HIV status with those you trust—such as family members, friends, and

children—can help with the stresses of having HIV, and can actually improve your overall health.

Telling your healthcare provider is important to make sure that you receive the best care for your HIV.

In most cases, sharing your HIV status is a personal choice—but it may also be a legal requirement. Many states have laws that require you to tell specific people.

Before you decide to tell people that you are HIV-positive, here are some things to consider:

Think about the people you rely on for support, like family, friends, or coworkers.

- What kind of relationship do you have with these people? What are the pros and cons of telling them you are living with HIV?
- Are there particular issues a person might have that will affect how much they can support you?
- What is that person's attitude and knowledge about HIV?
- Why do you want to tell this person? What kind of support can they provide?
- For each person you want to tell, ask yourself if the person needs to know now—or if it's better to wait.



Be sure to get answers to any questions you have about HIV/AIDS. Your public health department and health care provider can help.

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