

HIV CURE



Does taking HIV medicine cure HIV?

No. Taking your HIV medicine will not cure HIV. If you take your medicine every day, you might be able to reach an '**undetectable viral load**'. This means there is only a small amount of HIV in your body, and it is being kept under control.

As long as this is the case, **HIV shouldn't make you ill**. It will also be untransmissible to others through sex. But an undetectable viral load does not mean your HIV is cured. Although HIV treatment stops more HIV from being produced, **it doesn't get rid of the HIV completely**. Even when your viral load is undetectable, there is still some HIV inside your body.

So, **you will need to take treatment for HIV every day**, throughout your life or until a cure is found.

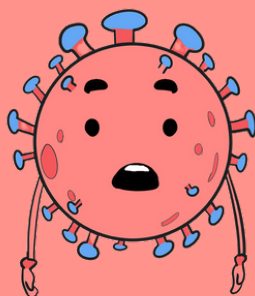


Is there a cure for HIV?

At the moment, **there is no general cure for HIV**. However, there is a lot of research being done to see if one can be found.

You may have heard about the handful of people who have been cured of HIV. These people were once living with HIV, but after a medical procedure they no longer have it.

The procedure they had is called a **stem cell transplant**, a treatment for certain life-threatening cancers.



For almost all of these people, cancer doctors were able to find stem cell donors who had a very special type of cell. These cells were resistant to HIV and they were able to treat the person's cancer. **This is very rare.**

The main aim of the treatment was to stop cancer, which otherwise would have killed these people. But as a secondary effect, there was no longer any HIV in their bodies. However, this procedure wouldn't be suggested **unless you had a specific type of cancer** and other treatments weren't working. It can be very dangerous (some people have died), and it doesn't even cure HIV in everyone who tries it.

Why isn't there a cure for everyone yet?

HIV is a very complicated condition to try and cure. This is because **HIV can 'hide' in certain cells** and it's hard for scientists to find out where all these cells are.

There are millions of possible cells where it could be hiding, and HIV medicine can't reach these cells.

This makes developing an HIV cure very difficult, but **that doesn't mean it won't happen sometime in the future.**



How long will it be before there is a cure for HIV?

We don't know if there will be a cure for HIV, and if it is possible, how long it will take to develop. It will depend on lots of different factors, including the type of cure.

An **'eradication' cure** would be something that gets rid of all the HIV in your body. This is sometimes called a **'sterilisation' cure**. It would be the most difficult type of cure to develop for everyone and if it happens, it will be a long time in the future.

A **'functional' cure** would keep the level of HIV in your body undetectable or very low without needing to take treatment. This might be slightly less difficult to develop. It also might work for more people.



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We're grateful to all who contributed their time and expertise.

Chiva is a charity which works in the UK and Ireland to ensure children and young adults growing up with HIV become healthier, happier and more in control of their own futures.

NAM aidsmap is a UK-based charity which changes lives by sharing independent, accurate, and accessible information about HIV and AIDS.