



Putting People First

THE LANGUAGE AND TERMS WE USE TO DESCRIBE HIV AND AIDS can either help foster positive attitudes about people living with HIV or fuel stereotypes and discrimination. Using people-first language can help reduce HIV-related stigma because it focuses on people rather than their health status and presents a more respectful portrayal of individuals. People-first language is also free of the kinds of value judgments about a person's behavior that may put them at greater risk of contracting HIV. In addition, using gender-inclusive language can help lessen stigma surrounding HIV while also helping to promote gender equality and eliminate gender bias. We can better support those living with—and at risk of contracting—HIV by choosing our words carefully and accurately.

STIGMATIZING OR INACCURATE LANGUAGE	PREFERRED LANGUAGE
HIV/AIDS	Be specific. Are you referring to HIV, AIDS or both?
HIV-infected person, HIVers, HIV or AIDS carrier, victim, sufferer	Person living with HIV or AIDS. Emphasize the person not their diagnosis.
HIV or AIDS patient	Client or member of the HIV community
Died of AIDS	Died of an AIDS-related illness, AIDS-related complications or end-stage HIV
Full-blown AIDS	AIDS or end-stage HIV. AIDS has no stages.
HIV infections	HIV acquisitions, transmissions, cases or diagnoses
Contaminated or infected with HIV	Contracted or acquired HIV or diagnosed with HIV
Catch, contract or transmit AIDS or catch HIV	Contract, transmit or acquire HIV. AIDS is not transmitted, and HIV is not something you catch.

Coinfect	Contract, transmit or acquire multiple viruses
Serodiscordant couple	Serodifferent or mixed-status couple
HIV-exposed infant	Infant exposed to HIV
AIDS orphan	Children orphaned by the loss of parents or guardians who died of AIDS-related complications
Compliant or noncompliant	Adherent or nonadherent is more positive and proactive.
HIV is a death sentence, fatal or a life-threatening condition.	HIV is a chronic, manageable health condition that can be serious for people not in care or treatment.
Prevent HIV infection	Reduce the risk of contracting or acquiring HIV
Unprotected or unsafe sex	Sex without a condom, sex without the use of PrEP or sex without an undetectable viral load. Be specific.
Prostitute; prostitution	Sex worker; transactional sex or the sale of sexual services
Promiscuous	Having more than one sexual partner
Tainted needles; tainted blood	Shared needles or equipment; blood containing HIV
Clean or dirty	Avoid these terms. HIV has nothing to do with one's hygiene.
Drug user/addict	Person who uses drugs or who has a substance use disorder
A transgender, transgendered	Person who is transgender, person of trans experience
Biological sex	Assigned gender at birth
Incorrect or assumed pronouns	Use correct pronouns. If unsure, ask.
Sex change operation/surgery	Gender-affirming surgery
Changed gender or sex	Transitioned
Gendered terms (mailman, manmade)	Use inclusive terms (mail carrier, made by humans)



This language chart was adapted from guidelines created for and by people living with HIV. Visit [POZ.com/basics/language](https://www.poz.com/basics/language) for more information and resources on using people-first language.

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A HEALTHIER LIFE CAN START WITH HIV TREATMENT.

It's important to start HIV treatment as soon as possible and stick with it. When you do, it helps stop the damage HIV causes. Plus, doctors and scientists have found that it can help reduce the risk of some infections, certain cancers, and even AIDS.

TREATMENT HELPS PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HIV.

If you're living with HIV, a major goal is to get your viral load to undetectable. This means that there is so little virus in the blood that a test can't measure it. How can you get to and stay undetectable? By taking HIV treatment every day. **Current research shows that getting to and staying undetectable prevents the spread of HIV to others through sex.**



TALK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER.

Have an open conversation. There's no cure for HIV, but when you work together it helps your healthcare provider find the treatment that's right for you.



WATCH "HIV: It's Called Treatment as Prevention"

Learn about Treatment as Prevention (TasP) and see how staying on treatment can help protect you and the people you care about.

[YouTube.com/HelpStopTheVirus](https://www.youtube.com/HelpStopTheVirus)



STOPPING THE VIRUS CAN START WITH YOU.

Watch videos, share information, and see how we can all help stop the virus.

[HelpStopTheVirus.com](https://www.HelpStopTheVirus.com)

[YouTube.com/HelpStopTheVirus](https://www.youtube.com/HelpStopTheVirus)

STOP THE VIRUS.



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START HIV TREATMENT.



HELP PROTECT YOUR HEALTH.

There is no cure for HIV, but find out how treatment helps make it possible to live a healthier life.



SEE INSIDE

