

# TasP+

Treatment as Prevention

## What is TasP?

TasP stands for **Treatment as Prevention** and is one of the most effective ways in which HIV-positive people can take control of their health and significantly reduce the risk of onwards HIV transmission.

TasP refers to the practice of beginning on antiretroviral medication to suppress the HIV viral load in the body. The aim of being on antiretroviral medication is to bring the individual's viral load down to an undetectable level<sup>(1)</sup> so it becomes much less likely to transmit the virus through unprotected sex or injecting drug use.

The best thing about TasP is that it engages everyone to think about their HIV status because it encourages regular HIV testing. Regular testing and early detection of HIV leads to better treatment coverage across a community and in turn reduces the rate of new HIV diagnoses.

## How does TasP work?

It is known that antiretroviral treatment greatly reduces the HIV viral load in blood, semen, vaginal fluid and rectal fluid to very low levels. This vastly reduces the risk of onward HIV transmission. Multiple studies have shown that early initiation of treatment in HIV-positive people leads to a strong CD4 count and decreased viral load which results in a reduced transmission risk to HIV-negative partners by 96%.<sup>(2)</sup>

## Who can use TasP?

TasP is for all people living with HIV. It is used to describe those who are on HIV treatment so they can minimise the harm that HIV can do and minimise the transmission of HIV to others.

## When should I start TasP?

Always talk to your health care provider about starting treatment for HIV to find a time that is right for you. Immediate antiretroviral treatment after diagnosis is now firmly encouraged by the medical professions as it reduces inflammation in the body caused by HIV.

## What are the long term effects of TasP?

The HIV antiretroviral medications we have today are very well tolerated by the body, with minimal side-effects. There are many different combinations available to find the best combination for any HIV-positive person.

### For more information, please visit:

- [livingpositivevictoria.org.au/living-with-HIV/treatment-as-prevention](http://livingpositivevictoria.org.au/living-with-HIV/treatment-as-prevention) ➔
- [avert.org/professionals/hiv-programming/prevention/treatment-as-prevention](http://avert.org/professionals/hiv-programming/prevention/treatment-as-prevention) ➔

### REFERENCES

- (1) When copies of HIV cannot be detected by standard **viral load** tests, an HIV-positive person is said to have an "**undetectable viral load**." For most tests used clinically today, this means fewer than 50 copies of HIV per milliliter of blood (<50 copies/mL).
- (2) Cohen, M.S. et al (2011) "Prevention of HIV-1 Infection with Early Antiretroviral Therapy" The New England Journal of Medicine - I know you don't need this for the sheet but just in case it's needed.