



Undetectable viral load & treatment as prevention

# What does undetectable = untransmittable (U=U) mean?

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'Undetectable = Untransmittable' (U=U) is a campaign explaining how the sexual transmission of HIV can be stopped.

When a person is living with HIV and is on effective treatment, it lowers the level of HIV (the viral load) in the blood. When the levels are extremely low (below 200 copies/ml of blood measured) it is referred to as an undetectable viral load. This is also medically known as virally suppressed. At this stage, HIV cannot be passed on sexually.

This scientific evidence was gathered from several studies. The studies included thousands of heterosexual and gay couples in which one partner had HIV and the other did not. Over the course of the studies, they found that there was not a single HIV transmission from an HIV-positive partner who had an undetectable viral load.

When a person is undetectable, condoms are not required to prevent HIV transmission, but being undetectable does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections.

U=U applies to transmission through sex only. We have more information about the risk of

transmission through other routes, including [breastfeeding](#) and sharing needles.

We have provided a [U=U](#) page specifically for HIV-negative people. As well as U=U, [PrEP](#) is another way to prevent HIV transmission, for HIV-negative people who may not know the HIV status of their sexual partner(s) or whose sexual partner(s) is not undetectable.

Read more:

- [Information for people living with HIV.](#)
- [Information for HIV-negative people.](#)
- [NAM's endorsement of the U=U campaign.](#)

Read more about the key U=U studies:

- [PARTNER 1](#)
- [PARTNER 2](#)
- [Opposites Attract](#)
- [HPTN 052: initial analysis](#) and [final analysis.](#)



**Find out more about U=U in our video we made with animation studio Animade.**

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