

## Disclosing your HIV status: matters to consider

For many people, the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV makes the prospect of others finding out that they have it a great source of anxiety. The decision to disclose your HIV status is therefore a complex process and may cause anxiety because of fear of how others might respond.

Remember that **you have the right to keep your HIV status private and are not required to disclose it.** Bear in mind too, however, that **the experience of sharing this information with another person may also be enriching and constructive.**

### Do you want to share it?

When deciding, you may wish to **consider the following matters:**

- **Your reasons.** Reflect on your needs, concerns, and expectations about sharing your HIV status and whether it will benefit you.
- **Reactions.** Some people will be supportive, while others may react negatively. Be prepared to deal with possible fears, prejudices, or lack of knowledge about HIV.
- **Confidentiality.** Whether or not to disclose your HIV status is completely up to you. Consider whether the person you share with will be able to keep it private.
- **How to disclose it.** Choose a time and circumstances in which you can express yourself freely. Prepare additional information about HIV to answer questions and clarify any queries.
- **Your own process.** Consider your circumstances and make sure you are emotionally prepared beforehand. Take the time you need. There is no rush.



### What may happen?

Disclosing HIV status **may have different consequences, which can be positive and negative.**

#### On the positive side:

- You may feel understood and receive support, which can significantly improve your well-being.
- You would no longer have to hide the fact you have HIV or lie about your health.
- You may openly address issues that are important to you.
- Your sexual partners will be able to make informed decisions..

#### On the negative side:


- You may encounter negative, hostile, or aggressive reactions.
- You may be exposed to rejection, stigma, or discrimination from others.
- You may face questions or comments judging you inappropriately.
- You may have to give support to concerned or bewildered people at a difficult time for you.

## Legal considerations


In Spain, people with HIV have a right to privacy and are not legally required to disclose their HIV status to either casual or regular sexual partners. In principle, mere exposure to risk is considered neither a crime nor a misdemeanour. Bear in mind the scientific evidence supporting the success of treatment as a preventive measure. A person on antiretroviral treatment who maintains an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus, even in situations often considered risky, such as when a condom breaks or in sex without a condom.

Notwithstanding the right to privacy, there are also duties and responsibilities, in the event of a situation of risk of transmission. In this situation, if the person with HIV has a detectable viral load, he or she is required to disclose the HIV status so that the partner (casual or steady) may take appropriate prophylactic measures (including post-exposure prophylaxis). This therefore prevents harm to the partner.





grupo de trabajo sobre tratamientos del VIH  
ENTIDAD DECLARADA DE UTILIDAD PÚBLICA  
ONG DE DESARROLLO



¿TIENES DUDAS SOBRE EL TEMA?  
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Si te surge alguna pregunta tras leer esta ficha, te aconsejamos hablar con tu médico o enfermera o llamar a gTt-VIH, al 93 458 26 41, para comprobar si existe alguna novedad relevante al respecto.

[www.gtt-vih.org](http://www.gtt-vih.org)

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