

Reinfection with HIV

A person with HIV is considered to have been reinfected when they acquire a second strain of the virus. Reinfection may occur through the same channels as the initial infection (unprotected sexual intercourse, sharing syringes, etc.) and the risks involved and means of protection are the same (see infoVIHtal sheets: **Transmission of HIV** and **Combined sexual prevention**).



I am not taking HIV treatment. How can reinfection affect me?

Although it is not always the case, reinfection with HIV can involve risks and complications. The second strain may, for example, be drug-resistant, which could limit your future antiretroviral treatment options. This second strain may likewise cause the infection to advance quicker and therefore affect your health.

Safe sex will protect you against possible reinfection. It will also stop the infection from spreading to your partners.

What if I am taking antiretroviral treatment?

The chances of reinfection occurring are different depending on whether the individual is taking antiretroviral treatment. People taking antiretroviral treatment run a very low risk of reinfection with HIV. This is because treatment acts to prevent HIV and drastically reduces the risk of reinfection.

In addition, if reinfection does occur, but the strain of HIV is not resistant to the treatment you are taking, the medication will have no difficulty in controlling the new virus as well. It will therefore not have a significant impact on your health.

However, even if you are taking the treatment as prescribed, there is still a chance (albeit very small) of acquiring a second strain that is resistant to your treatment. In this case, reinfection will make your viral load detectable again and you will need to change the treatment.

Main points:

Reinfection with HIV involves acquiring a second strain of the virus, which can sometimes have an impact on your health.

The risk of reinfection and impact are generally lower if you take antiretroviral treatment.

Treatment is a good way of protecting both your own health and that of your partners. It also helps to minimise the risk of reinfection.

If reinfection does occur and the strain is resistant, this will have an impact on your treatment options.



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



¿TIENES DUDAS SOBRE EL TEMA?
PREGÚNTANOS
Tel. 93 458 26 41

Descargo de responsabilidad

La información contenida en esta ficha no pretende sustituir la recibida por el médico. Las decisiones referentes a la salud siempre deberían tomarse tras consultar con los profesionales sanitarios. La información médica puede quedar desactualizada con rapidez.

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.

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