

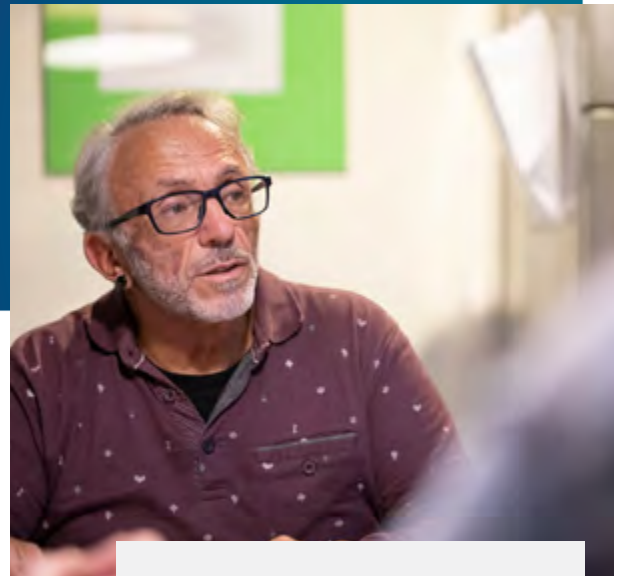
HIV & Shared Care

Working with my healthcare team to manage my HIV

If you are diagnosed with HIV, this means you will need to develop a close relationship with your doctors and healthcare providers who will share your healthcare between them. **Shared care** is a phrase that refers to the responsibility of two or more healthcare professionals and/or teams to monitor and manage your HIV healthcare.

The Facts

- When you are diagnosed with HIV, you will generally have at least two doctors involved in your healthcare, a General Practitioner (GP) and a HIV specialist doctor or HIV clinic.
- Not all GPs are specialists in HIV. After your diagnosis you will need a doctor who has experience with HIV and has completed specialised training which enables them to prescribe your HIV antiretroviral medication.
- Your GP will be the coordinator for your healthcare and takes care of all your non-HIV related health needs while your HIV care is guided by your HIV specialist doctor who will also prescribe your HIV medications and order your blood tests. Your GP can also order your blood tests and forward the results to your HIV specialist doctor.
- Your HIV specialist doctor normally manages your HIV, prescribes your HIV antiretroviral medication, and checks your blood test results while your GP treats common ailments like a cold, a sprained ankle etc.
- HIV specialist doctors within sexual health or hospital-based clinics will usually refer you back to your current GP for your ongoing care or ask you to find a GP.
- Some GPs complete a special course in HIV to become a *Schedule 100 Prescriber GP* (known as an s100 Prescribing GP or s100 GP) which means they can perform the role of being your GP and also coordinate your HIV healthcare.



Healthcare Team Members

GP - coordinates your healthcare and takes care of all your non-HIV related health needs

HIV specialist doctor - prescribes HIV medication, monitors your blood test results and manages your HIV related health needs

s100 GP - is a GP as well as a HIV specialist doctor

Other HIV specialists - HIV clinical nurse practitioner, HIV neurologist, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc

Managing your HIV healthcare

There are four ways to manage your HIV healthcare.

1. In a NSW Health Sexual Health Clinic (which can sometimes be in a public hospital) with doctors and nurses, and with your GP.
2. In a NSW Health HIV specialist/HIV clinic in a public hospital, and with your GP. This option usually includes nurses and might have a clinical nurse practitioner who can prescribe HIV antiretroviral medication.
3. In a HIV clinic or sexual health clinic by a s100 GP. This option can also include the practice nurse, or a HIV specialist clinical nurse practitioner.
4. In a GP clinic by an s100 GP. This option may be limited especially for people living with HIV who are in rural areas

People who are ineligible for Medicare, can access HIV care through a NSW Health Sexual Health Clinic or hospital-based clinic, who are able to provide their HIV management and care. They will need to see a GP for all their non-HIV related health needs using their student health insurance or travel health insurance.

Deciding what works for you

The early stages of being diagnosed with HIV may feel complicated but with a close relationship between your doctors, this should become easier.

Take some time to think about how you would like to manage your HIV healthcare. Some questions to ask yourself include:

- Is bulk billing an important consideration in my healthcare decisions?
- Do I already have a current GP who I like? Or do I need some help to find a GP?
- Does my current GP know about my HIV? Or am I uncomfortable with them knowing about my HIV?
- Do I already have a sexual health clinic where I get my HIV healthcare? Or do I need some help to find a HIV specialist doctor?
- Am I able to manage seeing an HIV specialist doctor or a sexual health clinic for my HIV healthcare, and seeing my GP for my non-HIV related health needs like colds, flu vaccinations, sprained ankle etc?
- Do I live in an area where there is limited or no HIV specialist doctor?

Some choices and options

- Some people choose to access a NSW Health Sexual Health Clinic or HIV specialist clinic, but need to find a GP for their non-HIV related health needs and coordinate their HIV healthcare.
- Some people already have an HIV specialist doctor involved in their healthcare, and need to find a GP for their non-HIV related health needs and coordinate their HIV healthcare.
- Some people chose to find an s100 GP who can take care of their HIV healthcare and all their other health needs.
- Some people prefer to access a NSW Health Sexual Health Clinic or HIV specialist clinic, and want a GP who speaks their language for all their non-HIV related health needs.
- Chat to your doctor or clinic nurse about your options.
- Ask your friends living with HIV about how they manage their HIV healthcare needs.
- Contact a Positive Life peer support worker living with HIV to explore your options.
- If you have a lot of appointments and your healthcare is getting difficult to manage, you may benefit from having a Care Co-ordinator/Case Manager who can help you stay on top of your appointments.



Support to work out how to manage your healthcare team

You can contact a Positive Life Peer Support Officer (who lives with HIV themselves) to explore your options and choices about your HIV healthcare team. Call (02) 8357 8386, 1800 245 677 or email contact@positivelife.org.au

For more information phone 02 8357 8386 or 1800 245 677 (freecall) or visit www.positivelife.org.au