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The basics

Undetectable viral load



This leaflet can be viewed in large format as a PDF.
Call NAM on 020 3242 0820.



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Notes

Why it's good to have an undetectable viral load

- If you have very little HIV, it won't be able to attack and weaken your immune system, which is the body's natural defence system.
- If your immune system is strong, you are less likely to get infections and illnesses.
- An undetectable viral load reduces your risk of passing on HIV.

Want to find out more?

For more information on this topic:

- read NAM's booklet 'CD4, viral load & other tests', or
- speak to an adviser at THT Direct (phone: 0808 802 1221).

For more information about HIV

You can get free fact sheets, booklets, email bulletins and a newsletter from our website at www.aidsmap.com/resources. You can get answers to common questions at www.aidsmap.com/hiv-basics and find local services at www.aidsmap.com/e-atlas.

Contact us by calling 020 3242 0820 or by sending an email to info@nam.org.uk

Has this resource been useful to you?

Please let us know what you think by visiting our website at www.aidsmap.com/feedback, phoning us or sending an email to info@nam.org.uk. Your feedback helps us to improve the services we offer you.

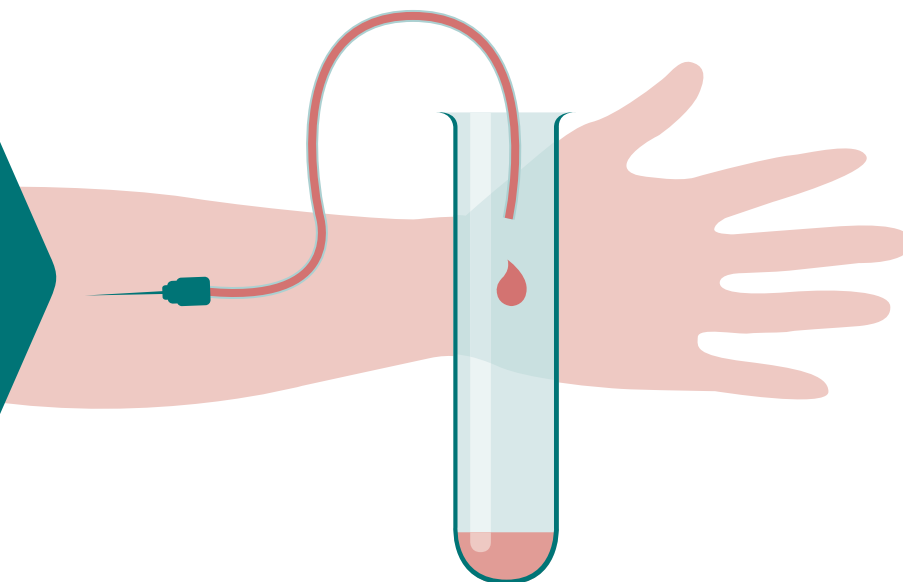
You can contact us to find out more about the scientific research and information we have used to produce this leaflet.

We recommend that you discuss the information in this leaflet with a doctor or other health worker.

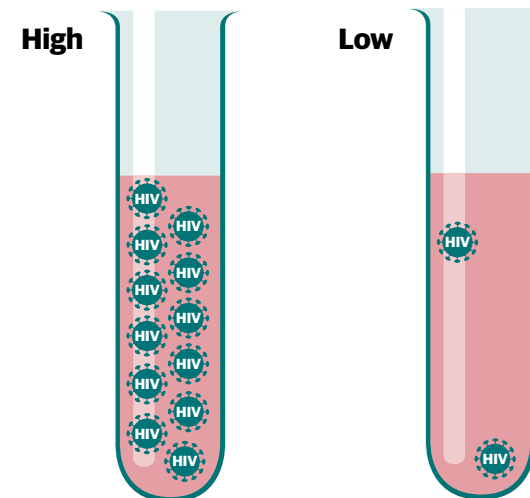
The aim of HIV treatment is to have a viral load that is 'undetectable'.

But what does that mean and why is it important?

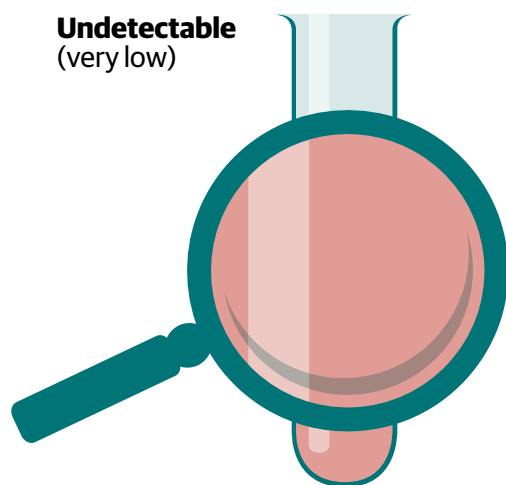
1 A viral load test tells you **how much HIV** there is in a drop of blood.



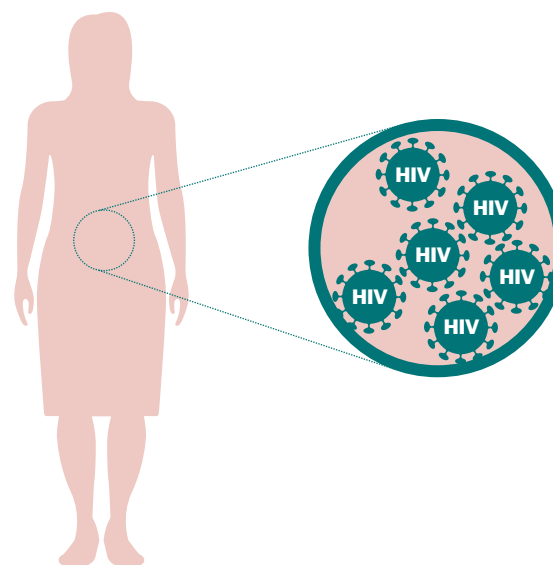
2 Test results give you a good idea of whether the amount of HIV is high or low.



3 However, the tests can't measure very small amounts of HIV. When you have very little HIV, you will be told that your HIV is 'undetectable'. This means that there was so little HIV in one sample of blood that the test couldn't find any.



4 It doesn't mean that HIV has disappeared entirely. It will still be present in other parts of your body, like the gut.



Important points

- If your viral load result is undetectable, there is only a little HIV in the body.
- The aim of HIV treatment is to have an undetectable viral load. This means that your HIV is being kept under control.