



The benefits of knowing your HIV status

Living with HIV is a journey that many approach with courage. As the HIV cases rise, it's important to recognise that individuals are now living longer and healthier lives while managing it as a chronic condition.

Knowing earlier, starting earlier

Regular HIV testing helps individuals know sooner if they are infected. According to the GEMS Preventative and Screening Benefit, testing should be done at least once a year, with costs covered by the risk benefit. Early diagnosis allows for prompt treatment, leading to better health outcomes. With early detection and proper care, individuals can live longer, healthier lives.

Procedure	Frequency	Eligible beneficiaries	Provider
HIV / AIDS pre-test counselling with no test	Once per benefit year	All beneficiaries	Pharmacy, General Practitioner (GP), or a Registered Nurse Practitioner.
HIV / AIDS (Screening test, post-test counselling, confirmatory test, and condoms)	Once per benefit year	All beneficiaries	Pharmacy, General Practitioner (GP), or a Registered Nurse Practitioner.

For the Comprehensive Preventative and Screening Benefits visit the [GEMS Website>Healthcare Providers> Preventative Screening.](#)



Staying HIV-free

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is medication that helps prevent HIV. PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) is medication taken after potential HIV exposure, and it must be started within 72 hours (3 days) to be effective.

Looking after loved ones

Testing is crucial for accessing treatment, which is an effective tool for preventing HIV transmission. Treatment lowers a person's viral load to undetectable levels, meaning they cannot pass the virus to others.

Stopping transmission to babies

Pregnant or breastfeeding woman with HIV can access options to stay healthy and ensure her baby is born HIV-free.

Claiming the right to health

Knowing their HIV status empowers individuals to make informed health choices and access affordable healthcare services.

Staying alive and well

Taking an HIV test can also provide an opportunity to screen and test for other illnesses, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, high blood pressure, and diabetes, thereby saving money and saving lives.

GEMS HIV Disease Management Programme Benefits: If you register on the GEMS HIV Disease Management Programme, you will have access to the following benefits:

- ✓ Antiretroviral therapy (ART) to treat HIV/AIDS.
- ✓ Medicine to treat and prevent opportunistic infections related to HIV/AIDS, including multi-vitamins where appropriate.

- ✓ Pathology tests that are required to assess your condition.
- ✓ Regular monitoring to ensure you start treatment at the right time and that it is effective.
- ✓ Clinical support and guidelines for your doctor.
- ✓ Access to a specially trained medical team who will review your details and consult with your doctor to ensure that you receive the most appropriate treatment for your condition.
- ✓ Reminders for you and your doctor to ensure that all regular check-ups and tests are done to optimise your treatment where necessary.
- ✓ Treatment to prevent the transmission of the HIV virus from mother to child (including medicine for the baby to prevent the transmission of the HIV virus from mother to child).
- ✓ Treatment to prevent the transmission of the HIV virus after accidental exposure to infected bodily fluids (sexual assault, needle-stick injury, etc.)

Where can I get help?

For more information about HIV testing and treatment or how to register on the programme, [Visit the GEMS Website> For individuals> Member Guides> HIV Member Guide.](#)

For confidential advice on the illness, contact the GEMS HIV Department on 0860 43 6736 or email us at hiv@gems.gov.za. You can also visit our GEMS website: www.gems.gov.za.

GET INFORMED. GET TESTED. GET INVOLVED.

Kind regards,
GEMS HIV DMP

