

## Frequently Asked Questions: HIV and COVID-19

### **How does COVID-19 affect people living with HIV?**

Although we are still learning about COVID-19 and how it affects people living with HIV, there is strong evidence from research carried out that people living with HIV may be more likely to become severely ill from COVID-19. Older adults and those with underlying medical conditions may be more vulnerable. All persons regardless of age and health status should take preventive actions including getting vaccinated, wearing a mask, frequently washing hands with soap and water, and practicing physical distancing.

### **What can people living with HIV do to protect themselves from COVID-19?**

If you are a person living with HIV, you should continue taking your HIV medicine. This is the best way to keep your immune system healthy. Staying healthy helps your immune system fight off infection should it occur. People with HIV can protect themselves from COVID-19 by

- Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible.
- Wearing a mask that properly covers your nose and mouth.
- Maintaining social distancing by staying 6 feet apart from all others
- Avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces.
- Washing hands often with soap and water.

### **Know your HIV status!**

If you are a person living with HIV or are concerned about your risk for HIV, please visit your nearest health facility to talk to your health provider about the benefits of HIV treatment, and the various prevention options open to you. People with HIV who take HIV medicine daily as prescribed can live long, healthy lives and protect their partners. People with HIV who get and keep an undetectable viral load (or stay virally suppressed) have effectively no risk of transmitting HIV to their sexual partners (U=U).

### **Will COVID-19 vaccines interfere with HIV medicine (antiretroviral therapy or ART) or pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)?**

There is currently no evidence that suggests potential interactions with ART or PrEP. People with HIV should not switch their HIV medicine in an attempt to prevent or treat COVID-19.

### **Does the vaccine against COVID-19 work in people living with HIV?**

Vaccines against COVID-19 are safe and effective for people living with HIV.

### **I am living with HIV. Should I get an additional dose of the COVID-19 Vaccine?**

Based on information available currently, the Ministry of Health does not recommend an additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for people with HIV who are virally suppressed or who do not have advanced HIV.

Please talk to your health care provider if you have more questions about COVID-19