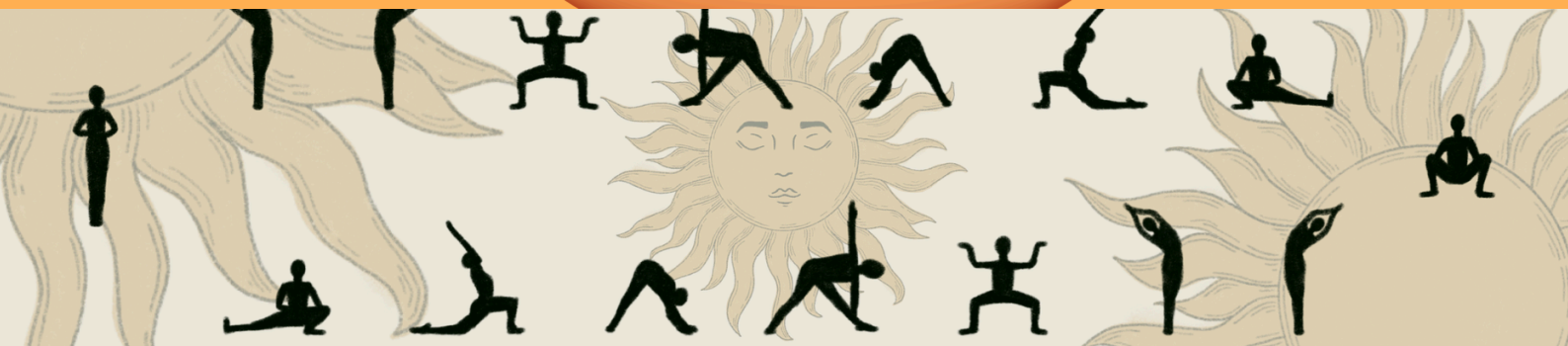


# PLWHNT

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV  
NORTHERN TERRITORY

**Injectable HIV Medication  
Is it for you?**

**FORUM & Survey for  
People Living with HIV  
YOGA Class coming**



Produced by NTAHC's Care  
& Support Program with  
support by NTAHC Comms

Welcome to your magazine created  
by and for people living with HIV, to  
inform, inspire, and connect.

# ***Introduction Letter – Northern Territory HIV Community Survey prior to the Forum taking place***

Hello,

We are sending out a community survey shortly for us to have a clearer idea around the scope of ideas that maybe voiced at the up and coming forum that will take place in Darwin (where TBC) before the end of this financial year, and we would really value your input.

Please scan the QR code with your phone camera then when the yellow bar comes up tap on it to take you to the survey.

The forum will be open to anyone living with HIV in the Northern Territory and will be a respectful and confidential space where everyone's voice is welcome.

The aim of the forum is simple – to listen to the voices of people living with HIV and to better understand what matters most to our community right now.

While we are committed to listening and learning, we recognise that we may not have the capacity to address or resolve every issue raised. However, your input will directly inform what is realistic, achievable, and able to be implemented.

Are there topics or issues that you feel need more attention? For example, people sometimes raise things like:

- Living and ageing with HIV
- Long-term treatment and medication side effects
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Stigma and discrimination
- Social connection and peer support
- Access to services in the NT
- Housing, cost of living, or other life challenges

But most importantly, we want to hear from you about what matters most.

Your ideas will help shape the conversation and make sure the forum reflects the real experiences and priorities of people living with HIV in the Northern Territory.

A collective voice carries real strength. By coming together, we can better understand our shared experiences, highlight the challenges we face, and identify opportunities to improve care, support, and community connections. Every perspective matters, and this forum is designed to ensure that everyone's voice is respected and valued.

More details about the date, location, and how to attend will be shared soon.

In the meantime, if you have suggestions for discussion topics or would like to register your interest, please feel free to reach out. to [mark.halton@ntahc.org.au](mailto:mark.halton@ntahc.org.au)

We look forward to bringing our community together for an open and meaningful conversation.

Warm regards, Mark Halton, Case Manager – Peer Navigator – NTAHC

## ***Living with HIV...by taking charge of the decisions that will help support you...***

With effective antiretroviral therapy (ART), people living with HIV are living longer, approaching a near-normal life expectancy.

This demographic shift means a growing number of individuals are aging with HIV, leading to a new set of health and social considerations that differ from those faced by younger people with HIV or older people without HIV.

These challenges require a more integrated approach to care that addresses both HIV-specific issues and general age-related health concerns.

While research highlights many challenges, the specific needs and experiences can vary greatly depending on individual circumstances, access to healthcare, social support networks, and cultural contexts.

The long-term effects of aging with HIV on various organ systems are still being studied, and optimal management strategies continue to evolve.

**Practical Takeaways** when considering your experience and your acknowledgement of your own lived experience.

- **Seek Integrated Care:** Older people living with HIV should seek healthcare providers who understand both HIV and geriatric care to manage complex health needs effectively.
- **Prioritize Mental Health:** Regular screening for depression and anxiety is crucial, and accessing mental health support should be encouraged.
- **Build Support Networks:** Actively combat social isolation by seeking out support groups, community programs, or maintaining connections with friends and family.
- **Advocate for Themselves:** Be proactive in discussions with healthcare teams about managing comorbidities, potential drug interactions, and any cognitive changes.

Over the last year or so I have been asked by a couple of friends to either go to the gym or attend Yoga class, I reluctantly said sure - but did nothing about it.

I would be one of the the last people who should recommend that someone living with HIV start getting involved with exercise.

Simply because I've avoided exercise at all costs.

Well after long contemplation and avoidance I decided to give it a go and Im happy I did something about it and I feel better for doing so.



# BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

It might feel counterintuitive at first, but done properly, it's one of the most protective and empowering things someone can introduce into their routine.

For someone living with HIV, exercise isn't about intensity or performance; it's about consistency and supporting the whole body.

Physically, the benefits are significant. Regular movement helps maintain muscle mass and bone density, both of which can be impacted over time by HIV itself and some antiretroviral treatments.

It also improves cardiovascular health, reducing the risk of heart disease—which is known to be higher in people living with HIV.

Even moderate activity like walking, swimming, or light resistance training can improve energy levels and reduce fatigue, something many people report struggling with.

There's also a strong immune system link. While exercise doesn't "boost" immunity in a simplistic way, it does support better immune regulation and reduces chronic inflammation. For someone managing a long-term condition, that balance is important.

Mental health is often where the biggest shift happens. Living with HIV can still carry stigma, isolation, or anxiety.

Exercise has been consistently shown to reduce symptoms of depression and stress, improve sleep, and increase overall sense of control. That psychological benefit can be just as important as the physical gains—sometimes more so.

Over the last year or so I have been asked by a couple of friends to either go to the gym or attend Yoga class, I reluctantly said sure - but did nothing about it.

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Well after long contemplation and avoidance I decided to give it a go - and I'm happy I did something about it, I feel better for doing so.



Over the next couple of weeks I will be looking into starting some beginners Yoga classes for anyone of us living with HIV who may just want to give it a try.

It will be a beginner's yoga class - a gentle introduction to yoga, focusing on basic poses, breathing, stretching, and relaxation.

It's designed for people with little or no yoga experience, so you don't need to be flexible or fit before starting.

In a beginner yoga class, you can expect:

Gentle warm-up stretches to loosen the body, Breathing exercises to help relaxation and focus...

Modifications for different fitness or mobility levels... Best style for absolute beginners...

**For someone new to yoga, We will be engaging someone who is trained as a beginners Yoga teacher.**

- Beginner / Foundations classes → designed specifically for first-timers
- If you have any joint or health issues that you may feel could inhibit you from participating fully just let us know and the best approach that you should take will be taken into consideration.

### **What to bring**

- Comfortable clothes
- Water bottle
- Small towel
- Most studios provide mats, but check when booking

**Given your interest in health and wellbeing, especially living with HIV, yoga can be fantastic for:**

- flexibility
- circulation
- reduced stress
- improved sleep
- gentle strength building



# LIVING WITH HIV BUT NOT DEFINED BY IT

HIV IS PART OF YOUR STORY –  
BUT IT IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY.

## 1. YOU ARE MORE THAN A DIAGNOSIS



You are a friend, parent, worker, partner, community member and more.

**HIV does not replace your identity – it sits alongside it.**

## 2. CHALLENGE NEGATIVE SELF-BELIEFS



Stigma can live in our heads.

- Is this belief actually true today?
- Would I say this to someone else living with HIV?

**Replace self-judgement with facts:**

Treatment works. People live long, healthy lives. You are not "less than".

## 3. KEEP BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE



HIV doesn't need to be the centre of everything.

- Stay connected to hobbies and interests
- Engage in work, culture, family and community
- Build a life that is bigger than HIV

## 4. YOU CONTROL YOUR STORY



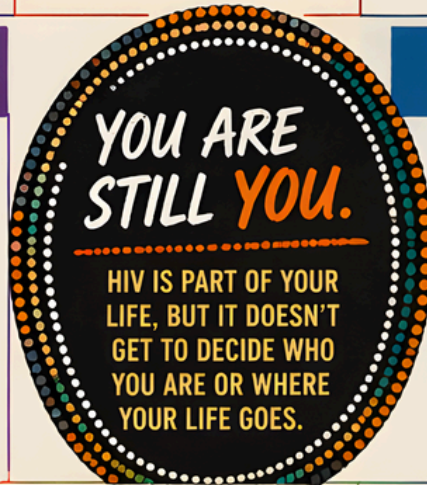
Disclosure is your choice.

- Tell people when YOU feel safe and ready
- You don't owe everyone your personal information
- Positive experiences can build confidence and reduce fear

## 5. TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR HEALTH



- Stay on treatment and attend appointments
- Understand U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable)
- Feeling in control of your health builds confidence



## 6. STAY CONNECTED – BUT NOT LIMITED



Peer support matters.

- Talk to people who understand
- Share experiences and learn from others

**But also:**

- Maintain connections outside of HIV spaces
- Keep your world broad and diverse

## 7. REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE – AND WHO YOU STILL ARE



HIV does not erase:

- Your strengths
- Your experiences
- Your achievements

**In many cases, people gain:**

- Resilience
- Empathy
- A stronger sense of purpose

## 8. SET GOALS BEYOND HIV



**Your future is still yours.**

Think about:

- Career or volunteering
- Relationships
- Travel, learning, creativity

**HIV is just one factor – not the focus.**

## 9. NOTICE WHEN HIV IS TAKING OVER



You might need support if:

- HIV is always on your mind
- Fear is stopping you from living your life
- You see yourself mainly through your diagnosis

Talking to a peer worker, counsellor or trusted person can help.

## 10. YOU DESERVE A FULL AND GOOD LIFE



**You deserve:**

- Respect
- Love
- Opportunities
- Good health
- Joy and connection

**Don't settle for less.**

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

There is support.

There is hope.

There is community.

**THERE IS YOU.**



**LOOK AFTER YOURSELF**

Body. Mind. Culture. Spirit.  
All of you matters.



**STAY INFORMED**

Knowledge is power.  
Ask questions. Keep learning.



**STAND STRONG**

Your story. Your life.  
Your way.

**HIV IS PART OF YOUR STORY – BUT IT IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY.**

U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable)

TREATMENT WORKS. PEOPLE LIVE LONG, HEALTHY LIVES.



## **Injectable HIV Medication available now at Clinic 34**

### **Speak with your treating HIV Dr**

The most frequently reported side effects for this treatment are injection site pain/a hardened lump (76%), headache (7%), and pyrexia (fever) (7%).

Less common side effects are outlined in the Consumer Medicine Information summary. Injection site pain can be reduced by starting paracetamol or NSAID therapy the day before the injection and continuing as needed for 2-3 days afterwards. Cold packs can also be used, although this is not routine. • Patients should avoid strenuous gluteal exercises for 12-24 hours after an injection.

**Scan the QR code below with your camera phone when then tap the yellow bar it will take you to the treatment guide for more information supplied by ASHM.**

ASHM provides support to the HIV, viral hepatitis and sexual health workforce. It formed initially as a self-help and self-education organisation for clinicians at the forefront of HIV and was first known as the Australian Society of AIDS Physicians.

ASHM has expanded its interest to include viral hepatitis and sexual health and to embrace the range of individuals in the health workforce.



<https://ashm.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/ASHM-Long-Acting-Injectable-HIV-Treatment-Tool-Aug24.pdf>

**Your paragraph text**



Join us for a special evening at Deckchair Cinema as NTAHC presents Stories & Cinema: Celebrating 40 Years of Advocacy, Health and Community.

On Sunday 3 May, experience the iconic Australian film Priscilla Queen of the Desert, enhanced by subtle pop-up performances from local drag artists, creating a unique and engaging cinema experience.

The evening will also include a lucky door prize and limited "Priscilla" prop bags for audience participation. Guests are encouraged to embrace the spirit of the event and dress up if they wish.

Food will be available for purchase from Hugs PaNim, with a full bar operating throughout the evening.

This event is a fundraiser for NTAHC, supporting ongoing work in advocacy, health and community across the Northern Territory. Donations are welcome on the night.

#### Event Details

Deckchair Cinema, Darwin

Sunday, 3 May 2026

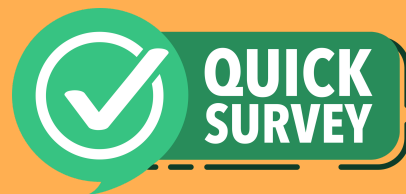
Gates open: 5:45pm

Speeches: 6:45pm

Film to follow

Tickets available via the NTAHC website.

# NEW SURVEY BY NTAHC CARE AND SUPPORT



## EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

This survey invites people living with HIV in the Northern Territory to share their experiences of care, support, and connection especially in the context of remoteness and social inclusion.



SCAN QR CODE  
SURVEY LINK

## International AIDS Candlelight Memorial

On Sunday 17 May, NTAHC will mark the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial in Alice Springs and Darwin, creating a space for remembrance, reflection, and community connection.

See [ntahc.org.au.au/international-aids-candlelight-memorial](https://ntahc.org.au.au/international-aids-candlelight-memorial)



### ALICE SPRINGS

Sunday 17 May  
9:00am – 1:00pm  
Todd Mall Markets



### DARWIN

Sunday 17 May  
6pm – 7:00pm  
Nightcliff Foreshore  
Sunset Park (left of the Jetty)

- **Health Service Access, Especially for Older Adult.**
  - Aging among people living with HIV in the NT is a growing concern.
  - Access to GPs experienced in HIV care is limited, and travel costs and availability of comprehensive care can be challenging, especially outside Darwin.
  - NAPWHA has been holding a regular forum for those who are aging with HIV.
  - What works for you and what has been a struggle.
  - Remember all of us have something to offer.
  - Listening to others who have been living with HIV for some time can be empowering - You don't have to appear online if you don't wish to - just register and your good to go.
- 
- **NAPWHA's BOLDER ON LINE** - [Bolder Online: a beacon for older people with HIV seeking connection and support.](#)
  - In the digital age, support and community have found a new home online. The Bolder Online initiative, launched by NAPWHA, stands as a testament to this evolution.

If you would like to be included in joining this important forum, please go to the link below to register.

<https://napwha.org.au/older-people-with-hiv/>



## **Heterosexual Men's Advocacy Network.**

Our aim is to advocate for the well-being of heterosexual men living with HIV in Australia and Aotearoa.

New Zealand.

If you are a heterosexual man living with HIV, who might be interested to connect with other straight guys LWHIV.

Please be assured that we pay careful attention to privacy and confidentiality. Registration essential via email: [hetman@napwha.org.au](mailto:hetman@napwha.org.au)

If you would need any clarification around this please feel free to call Anth on 0490 214 554 for a chat to learn more before taken the next step. Kind regards Anth.

## **Positive Asian Network Australia.**

How to join Are you interested in joining PANA? This is open to all people living with HIV, of Asian-background, and living in Australia. You can find the registration form on the NAPWHA web site where you can fill in the form on line. Any any queries or questions to email: [pana@napwha.org.au](mailto:pana@napwha.org.au)

## **Positive Latinx Australian Network (PLAN)**

How to engage with us Are you living with HIV in Australia? Do you identify with a Latin American or Hispanic background? We would like to hear from you. We meet regularly to advocate on behalf of ourselves. Our social network will aim to provide a safe inclusive spaces and ways to connect with each other for social connection.

It is also a way to exchange conversations relating to HIV and general health – this includes talking about navigating the healthcare system in Australia. email: [plan@napwha.org.au](mailto:plan@napwha.org.au)



The NAPWHA-aided Positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network (PATSIN) is a national membership-based group for Indigenous people living with HIV (PLHIV). For more information and how to engage with us

<https://napwha.org.au/patsin/> [https://napwha.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/UsMobandHIV\\_2021.pdf](https://napwha.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/UsMobandHIV_2021.pdf)

PATSIN works within Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander communities and service providers to represent the interests of Indigenous Australians. It exists to provide an outlet for exchanging experiences and knowledge about HIV, and to advocate for change at the community level.

PATSIN is committed to increasing education and addressing the high-level of HIV stigma within Indigenous communities.

# LIVING POSITIVE - Northern Territory

