

# Hello ntario.info



## POCKET GUIDE



Committee for  
Accessible  
AIDS  
Treatment  
Toronto, Canada

**GMSH**  
GAY MEN'S SEXUAL HEALTH ALLIANCE



Ontario  
Ministry of  
HEALTH AND  
LONG-TERM CARE

**WHA** Women &  
HIV/AIDS  
Initiative

# Table of Contents

DID YOU KNOW.....	3
KNOW THE FACTS.....	4
WILL MY HIV STATUS AFFECT MY APPLICATION TO LIVE IN CANADA?.....	6
SETTLEMENT & LEGAL SERVICES.....	7
HEALTH CARE .....	8
ACCESSING MEDICATION FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV.....	9
FINDING THE RIGHT DOCTOR .....	10
HIV PROGRAMS & SERVICES.....	11
KEY CONTACTS .....	12
KEY CONTACTS .....	13







## DID YOU KNOW...

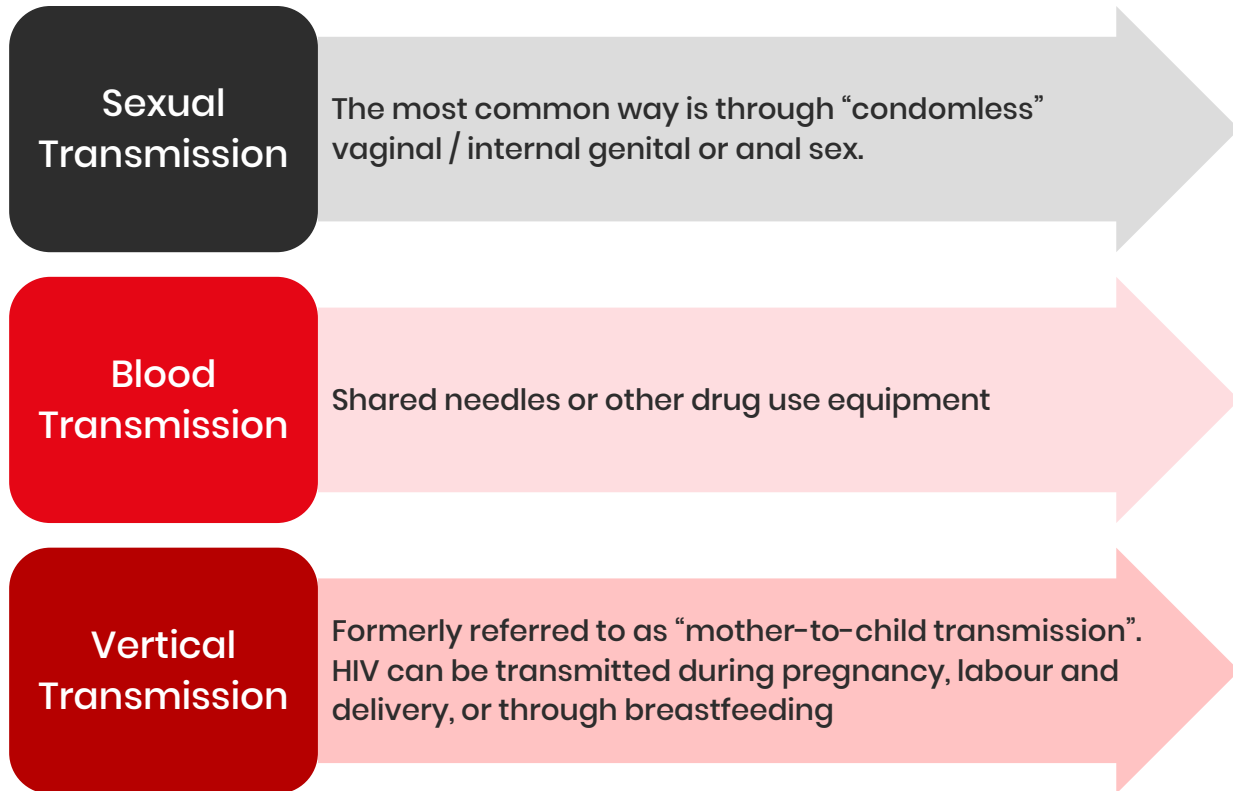
Over 31,000 people are estimated to be living with HIV in the province of Ontario.

We now know more about HIV than we ever have. We know that if you are diagnosed, connected to care, and start HIV treatment early you can have a long, healthy, full life. We also know that HIV treatment and maintaining an undetectable viral load (amount of HIV in bodily fluid usually measured in blood) is not only great for your health but also makes it unlikely that the virus can be passed on. We also have more tools than ever before to prevent the transmission of HIV.

In Ontario, there is a system of prevention, testing, care and support. There are many programs and resources to respond to HIV in the province. [HelloOntario.info](https://www.helloontario.info) is a website that is here to help you get connected. It is important to know where you can find the information and help you need. If you or someone you know is living with HIV/AIDS, this resource is here to provide you with basic information about HIV and AIDS, and to point you in the right direction for treatment, support and care services.

# KNOW THE FACTS

There are three ways HIV can be passed (transmitted) from one person to another:





There are only six fluids in the body that contain enough HIV to infect someone. These are:

Blood

Semen

Pre-seminal fluid (pre-cum / pre-ejaculatory fluid)

Anal/Rectal fluids

Vaginal fluids (Internal genital fluids)

Breast/chest milk



You can have HIV and not know it. The only way to know for sure is by getting tested. Your test results are yours and are not necessarily reflective of your partner(s) HIV status. HIV testing is available for free in Ontario. For more information to find free testing or resources for HIV-test kits or test centre location visit:

<https://www.readytoknow.ca/>

<https://getakit.ca/>

<https://hiv411.ca/organizations/>

For more information about HIV, visit [CATIE](#). To find out where to get tested for HIV, contact the Ontario [AIDS & Sexual Health InfoLine](#).



# WILL MY HIV STATUS AFFECT MY APPLICATION TO LIVE IN CANADA?

People living with HIV/AIDS have the same rights as all other people in Canada. Do not assume that your HIV status will prevent you from being granted the status you seek in Canada. Refugees and all people applying to live in Canada must complete an Immigration Medical Exam (IME) that includes an HIV test. Sharing your HIV status with your lawyer may make your refugee claim stronger. If you are comfortable with sharing, tell a lawyer about your HIV status as soon as you can. Lawyers are required by law to keep everything you say confidential.



# SETTLEMENT & LEGAL SERVICES

## SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Settlement services help newcomers settle and adjust to their new life in Ontario, offering services such as:

- 1 Interpretation and translation of documents
- 2 Help filling out forms and applications
- 3 English as a Second Language (ESL) classes
- 4 Help finding a job or training
- 5 Information about other community services, schools, and health care

**IMPORTANT:** These services are often free, and always confidential.

## LEGAL SERVICES

The HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO) is a charitable not-for-profit community-based legal clinic that provides free legal services for people living with HIV/AIDS who live in Ontario.





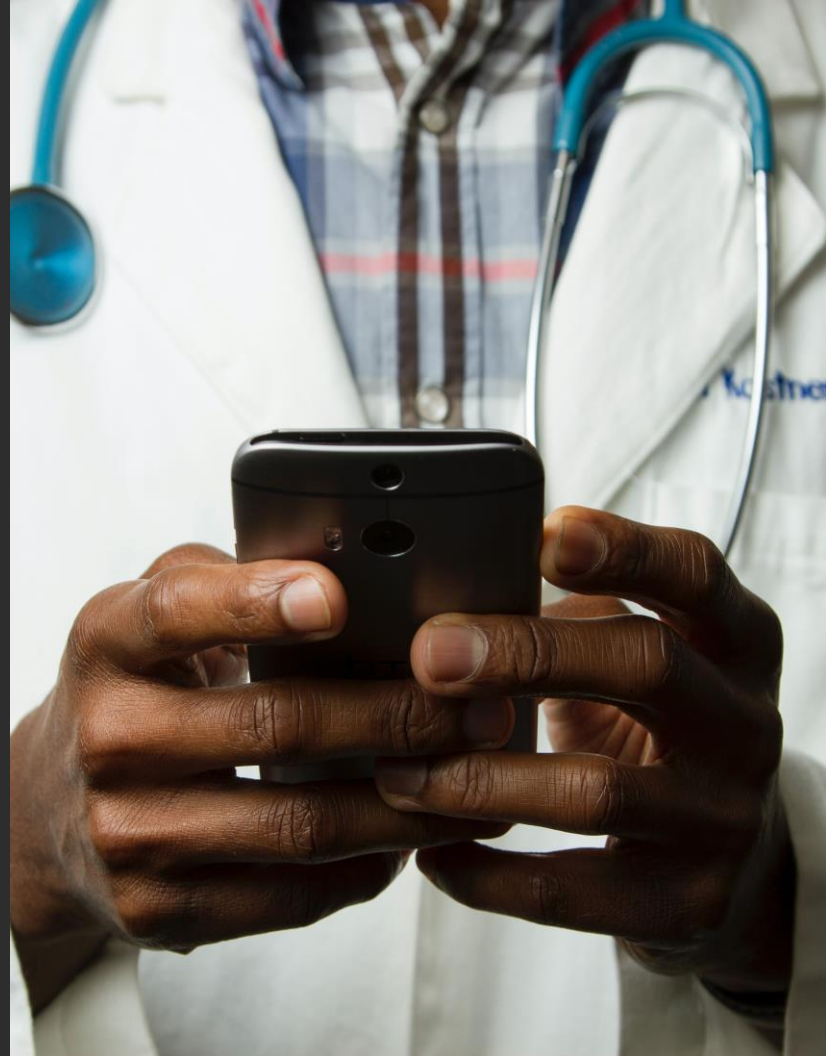


# HEALTH CARE

In Ontario, there is high quality HIV medical care available. If you are new to Ontario, you can access health care through your private insurance, the Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP), the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), or the Ontario Temporary Health Program, depending on your immigration status (e.g., immigrant, refugee, student, permanent resident, or visitor). If you are not entitled to public health care coverage, you may be able to access health care by going to a community health centre free of charge. To find a community health centre near you, kindly [click here](#). For more information about other services, [click here](#).

## IMPORTANT

If you need urgent medical care, you can go to a hospital emergency room. Hospitals are required to admit you, if your life is in danger. If you do not have an **Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP)** card, you will get a bill for the services provided by the hospital. If you cannot pay the bill, speak with your worker at your local AIDS service organization (ASO) or a lawyer. Do not let the prospect of a bill prevent you from going to a hospital emergency room if you are in need of urgent medical care.





# ACCESSING MEDICATION FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

For better health outcomes, getting into treatment early is recommended. People with HIV live longer, healthier lives.

HIV medication today is much easier to take and has fewer side-effects.

HIV medication is not free in Ontario. Finding a program to pay for HIV medication can take some time. As a person who is new to Ontario, you may not yet qualify for health care services and insurance. If you do not have an insurance plan to cover the cost of HIV medication, you can apply for government financial support programs that can help you pay for medication. Get help from your local community health centre, **settlement agency**, or AIDS service organization (ASO) to find out what financial support program you are eligible to apply to. A support worker at one of these organizations can help you fill out the paperwork and apply.



# FINDING THE RIGHT DOCTOR

In Ontario, there is very high quality HIV medical care available. But, not just any doctor or nurse practitioner can provide the high quality care you need and have a right to. To find high quality HIV care contact your local AIDS service organization (ASO) or community health centre. You can also contact [Health Care Connect](#).

In some cases, the care is provided by a person who specializes in treating infections like HIV. To access their services you need a referral from a family doctor.



## IMPORTANT

In Ontario, health care is confidential under the [Personal Health Information Act](#). Doctors are required by law to maintain patient confidentiality. Do not be afraid to ask your provider questions about their privacy and confidentiality policies.

To find an ASO near you, contact the Ontario [AIDS and Sexual Health InfoLine](#).



# HIV PROGRAMS & SERVICES

There are a number of social programs and services available for people living with HIV/AIDS in Ontario. Many of these programs and services are provided through AIDS service organizations (ASOs) and other community organizations. Services and resources include:

-  Counseling and support (for mental health and emotional wellness)
-  Financial advice and employment
-  Food and day-to-day living
-  Harm reduction (for people who use injection drugs and other substances – provision of safer drug use supplies)
-  Sexual health (counseling, free condoms and lubricant, referrals)
-  Housing referrals
-  Legal support and referrals
-  HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing

## IMPORTANT

HIV services in Ontario are confidential. What you discuss with your counsellor is between you and them. Ask about the agency's privacy and confidentiality policies when making an appointment.



# KEY CONTACTS

Find more detailed information related to HIV/AIDS for newcomers to Ontario by going to: [HelloOntario.info](http://HelloOntario.info)

Through the [AIDS and Sexual Health InfoLine](#), you can access trained counsellors you can talk to about sexual health, including HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), sexuality, sexual orientation, relationship concerns, etc. You can even get referrals to appropriate clinics and community agencies [e.g., AIDS service organization (ASO)] and HIV programs, or information about where to get tested for HIV across Ontario. This service is free and anonymous.

## [AIDS and Sexual Health InfoLine](#)

 For information in English and many other languages call: [416-392-2437](tel:416-392-2437)

 Toll-free in Ontario: [1-800-668-2437](tel:1-800-668-2437)

 Web: [goo.gl/j8cfoK](http://goo.gl/j8cfoK)

## Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday: 10:00 am - 10:30 pm

Saturday & Sunday: 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

French speaking counsellors available: Monday to Friday: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Closed on statutory holidays

To find an [ASO](#), community health centre, HIV program or [settlement agency](#) near you, you can also call:

## [211 Ontario](#)

 Tel: [211](tel:211) or [416-397-4636](tel:416-397-4636)

 Note: Service in over 100 languages

 Web: [goo.gl/NVDgrf](http://goo.gl/NVDgrf)

## Hours of Operation

Monday to Sunday: 24 hours a day

To find a community health centre near you, you can also call:

## [ServiceOntario INFOline](#)

 Tel: [416-314-5518](tel:416-314-5518)

 Toll-free: [1-866-532-3161](tel:1-866-532-3161)

 Web: [goo.gl/Bj9aQ9](http://goo.gl/Bj9aQ9)

## Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm





# KEY CONTACTS

To find a doctor or a nurse practitioner, contact:

## Health Care Connect

 Toll-free: **1-800-445-1822**

 Web: **[goo.gl/C2uG7p](https://goo.gl/C2uG7p)**

## Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

If you are living with HIV and need legal assistance, including help accessing health care or medication, contact:

## HIV & AIDS LEGAL CLINIC ONTARIO (HALCO)

 Tel: **416-340-7790**

 Toll-free in Ontario: **1-888-705-8889**

 Web: **[goo.gl/xavfEk](https://goo.gl/xavfEk)**

## Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

For new inquiries: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9:00 am - 5:00pm

This pocket guide is part of **HelloOntario.info**, which is a web-based resource about HIV and related services for people who are new to Ontario. It was created by the African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO), the Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment (CAAT), the Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance (GMSH) and the Women and HIV/AIDS Initiative (WHAI). The resource connects you to information about HIV, settlement and legal services, health care services and medication access, social programs and services, and more. The development of **HelloOntario.info** was funded by the AIDS Bureau, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Ontario).



Hello  Ontario.info



Committee for  
Accessible  
AIDS  
Treatment  
Toronto, Canada

**GMSH**  
GAY MEN'S SEXUAL HEALTH ALLIANCE



Ontario  
Ministry of  
HEALTH AND  
LONG-TERM CARE

**WHA** Women &  
HIV/AIDS  
Initiative