



COMPASS

*Navigating HIV Care as a New Patient at
Fenway Health*



Introduction: This guide is meant to help new or existing patients understand an HIV diagnosis by providing helpful information about what to expect as you establish HIV care at Fenway and about the disease itself. This guide also contains resources about other services offered at Fenway and in the community. We hope to provide you with answers to frequently asked questions and helpful tips about accessing care at Fenway Health and some of our partner organizations.

Fenway Health Sites & Services

<p>Fenway Health (Ansins Building) 1340 Boylston St. Boston, MA 02215 617.267.0900</p> <p>Primary care for adults and families, Transgender health, community health workers, sexual health, specialty care, radiology, behavioral health, pharmacy, Quest Lab, dental, optometry, research</p>	<p>Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center 1340 Boylston St Boston, MA, 02215 617.457.8140</p> <p>Medical care for patients ages 12- 28, transgender health, sexual health, behavioral health, Quest Lab</p>
<p>AIDS Action Cambridge 359 Green St. Cambridge, MA 02139 617.661.3040</p> <p>Access: Drug User Health, needle exchange, harm reduction services, sexual health, linkage to care medical care, community health workers, behavioral health</p>	



Table of Contents

WHO WE ARE	4
Primary Care at Fenway Health: Your Care Team	5
Who do I contact?	7
HDAP	9
Care and Services at Fenway Health	10
WHAT TO EXPECT	11
First Appointment with Primary Care Provider	11
After Your First Appointment	11
1 - 3 Months	11
4 - 6 Months	12
HIV BASICS	13
Living a Healthy Life with HIV	13
Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)	13
Other Ways to Maintain a Healthy Life with HIV	15
Diet & Nutrition	15
Mental and Behavioral Health	15
Substance Use Treatment	16
Support Groups	16
Exercise	17
Smoking Cessation	17
Medications	19
Aging	20
Vision/Optometry	20
Dentistry	21
Disclosure	22
Laws Protect People Living with HIV and AIDS	23
Other Resources	23
Consumer Advisory Board	24
Research	25
How to Get Involved	25
EXTERNAL RESOURCES	26



WHO WE ARE

Our mission

[Fenway Health](#) advocates for and delivers innovative, equitable, accessible health care, supportive services, and transformative research and education. We center LGBTQIA+ people, BIPOC individuals, and other underserved communities to enable our local, national, and global neighbors to flourish.

[The Fenway Institute](#) at Fenway Health is an interdisciplinary center for research, training, education and policy development focusing on national and international health issues.

Fenway's [Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center](#) cares for youth and young adults ages 12 to 29, including those who are LGBTQIA+ or just figuring things out; homeless; struggling with substance use; or living with HIV.

[AIDS Action](#), Fenway's public health division, works to reduce the number of HIV infections while supporting those already infected, and operates a drug user health program that serves as an entry point to healthcare services for people actively engaged in substance use.

Why Fenway?

Health care should be a right, not a privilege. To that end, **no one is denied care based upon their ability to pay.** Fenway has helped pioneer a philosophy of integrated care that looks at each patient as a whole person, and our staff works as a team to meet the needs of everyone who comes through our doors.

Since 1971, Fenway Health has been working to make life healthier for the people in our neighborhood, the LGBTQIA+ community, people living with HIV/AIDS, and the broader population. Fenway was founded in 1971 as part of the free clinic movement by students who believed that "health care should be a right, not a privilege."



Fenway & HIV

Fenway Health is a World-Renowned Provider of HIV/AIDS Care and the Largest Outpatient HIV Care Provider in New England

Fenway Health provides comprehensive care to patients living with HIV infection. We provide supportive and sensitive care to all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race, religion, or ability to pay. Our range of high-quality services includes:

- Primary care for patients living with HIV
- Antiretroviral therapy and side effect management for patients who require treatment
- Custom treatment plans for patients who have HIV resistant to previous drug regimens
- Comprehensive care for HIV-related conditions, including opportunistic infections
- Behavioral/Mental Health support and counseling
- Screening & treatment for sexually transmitted infections, cervical and anal dysplasia
- Support services including housing and legal assistance

Fenway's model of care for all patients views the mind and body as one. We offer individual and group therapy, psychiatric expertise, addiction treatment and support in a welcoming environment. We also offer on-site complementary therapies including detox, wellness, and acupuncture.

Other services offered at Fenway include dermatology, pulmonology, podiatry, and radiology. Our on-site pharmacy has two locations, 1340 Boylston Street and 142 Berkeley Street, and provides many benefits to Fenway patients. Our main clinic at 1340 Boylston Street also offers on-site eye care and dental care.

Primary Care at Fenway Health: Your Care Team

Each primary care team is anchored by your Primary Care Provider (PCP) who could be a physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner. You will see them more frequently with a new diagnosis, while you learn how to manage your health. Once you are confident with your knowledge and management skills, your regular visits will stretch to about twice a year.

Your team also includes nurses who you can call or message for questions about your health, your medications, lab results and interpretation, new symptoms, acute illness, self-care and questions for the provider.



The **High Acuity Community Health Worker (CHW) Program** includes BA/BS level social services workers who can help with assessing eligibility and enrollment into the high acuity program which includes access to prescription coverage resources, addressing issues related to social determinants of health including transportation, housing resources, food resources and other supports. They are supervised by and coordinate with the High Acuity Social Worker who can offer support and behavioral resources on a short term or acute basis, if necessary.

It is important to understand that our teams work closely with you to coordinate your care and have many years of experience supporting people living with HIV. They have developed resources to assist with many hurdles that can arise, and they encourage you to call with any barriers to care you may encounter.

Drop-in services are available on the 7th floor at 1340 Boylston St. for patients living with HIV looking for support on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10am-4pm

A Fenway provider is always available, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If you are a Fenway Health patient in need of urgent medical or behavioral health care and it is outside our normal business hours, please call **617.267.0900** and follow the prompts to reach the On-Call Provider. If your need is an emergency, please dial 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Fenway accepts most insurance plans as well as Medicare and Medicaid. Other government-sponsored programs are available for those who qualify. Has your employment situation recently changed? Are you currently uninsured? If you live in MA, we can help you enroll in insurance. We can also talk to you about our sliding fee program for those who are uninsured or underinsured. Call us at 617-927-6000. No one is denied care or HIV medications based upon their ability to pay.



Who do I contact if I need to:

Make an appointment with my medical provider?

To make an appointment at our 1340 Boylston St. clinic or South End location, please call our appointment line at 617.927.6000

For Sidney Borum Jr. Health Center appointments, please call 617.457.8140

Ask about the status of a referral my provider has already ordered?

Call our Referral Team at 617.927.6130

Refill my medication through the Fenway Pharmacy?

To refill a prescription at our 1340 Boylston St. location, call 617.927.6330 and follow the prompts for the automated refill system or the refill call center.

You can also download the app Rx2Go to request a refill on your mobile device.

Request a prescription renewal (no or low refills remaining) from my Fenway provider?

[Use your patient portal](#) account to request a medication or prescription renewal. Log into the portal and click “medications” on the landing page.

Alternatively, you can call the Prescription Refill Call Center at 617.927.6333. You may need to leave a voicemail with the details of your request (your name, name of prescription, preferred pharmacy, etc.), but the voicemail box is checked regularly.

Ask a question about a health concern?

For general health questions, medical advice, or medical concerns, call the Medical Call Center at 617.927.6300 and follow the prompts for “medical advice”. You can also send a non-urgent message to your care team through the MyChart patient portal.

To reach the after-hours provider on call with an urgent health concern, call 617.267.0900 and follow the prompts to reach the on-call provider. If you are experiencing an emergency, please dial 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.



Get help signing up for insurance or paying for care?

To make an appointment with our Financial Assistance Team at our 1340 Boylston St or South End clinic, call our appointment line at 617.927.6000

Get help paying for HIV Medications?

There are several options to help you pay for HIV medication. In Massachusetts, no one is denied care for HIV medications based upon their ability to pay.

- If you don't have insurance, make an appointment with our Financial Assistance Team at 617.927.6000 to help you enroll in insurance and/or access our Sliding Fee Scale program.
- For assistance with pharmacy co-pays and further support, you can contact Patient Services at 617.927.6300 to schedule an appointment with a general Community Health Worker.
- Ask your provider directly for a referral to the High Acuity Community Health Worker program for assistance applying for the HIV Drug Assistance Program (HDAP).
- If you have private insurance, you may be able to reach out directly to the drug manufacturer to sign up for a drug payment assistance program.



HDAP

The Massachusetts HIV Drug Assistance Program (HDAP) is a program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), administered by [Community Resource Initiative \(CRI\)](#). HDAP helps eligible state residents living with HIV to pay for medications and health insurance.

Eligibility Criteria

- HIV Status: You must provide proof that you are living with HIV.
- Income: Your annual income must be less than or equal to 500% of the federal poverty level, with extra allowances for any dependents.
- Residency: You must be a resident of Massachusetts /and need to provide proof of your Massachusetts address.
- Payer-of-Last-Resort: You must have a review of eligibility for MassHealth/Connector Care, Massachusetts Insurance Connection (MIC), or CHIP.

Enrollment and Recertification

To [enroll in HDAP](#), you need to submit a completed standard application (long form) and meet the eligibility criteria. Once approved, you will receive six months of coverage. Every six months, you need to submit a full recertification application (Long Form) or if eligible, a Self-Attestation (short form). Fenway staff can help assist you with applying online or using a paper application.

Services Covered

- Out-of-pocket costs for HIV-related prescription drugs and other medications
- Comprehensive Health Insurance Initiative (CHII) helps cover health insurance premium costs for private, public and employer-sponsored plans
- Out-of-pocket costs for HIV resistance testing



Programs and Services at Fenway Health

Primary care relationships may be established with a provider at Fenway Health or Fenway: South End, or the Sidney Borum, Jr. Health Center. As a Fenway patient, your medical team will work with you to provide integrated care with sensitivity to your personal needs and without judgment. We encourage you to take advantage of the many on-site benefits of being a Fenway patient. Click on the links below or visit our website, www.Fenwayhealth.org, for more information.

FENWAY HEALTH PROGRAMS & SERVICES			
Alternative Insemination	Digital imaging , including mammography	Labs on site, managed by Quest Diagnostics providing testing, including COVID-19 Testing.	Pharmacies on site (Fenway Health and Fenway: South End)
Behavioral Health (individual therapy, groups , psychiatry, and more)	Eye care , including exams, diagnosis and management of common eye diseases, and consultations for eyewear	Legal Assistance representing clients in a variety of civil matters	Specialty care on site, including dermatology, HRA, podiatry, pulmonology and geriatric care such as bone density screening. Referrals for outside specialty services.
Complementary therapies, such as acupuncture	Family Medicine	Community Health Worker Program & the High Acuity Community Health Worker Program	STI testing, counseling, and treatment
Care and services for LGBTQIA+ and other at-risk youth	Financial Assistance and insurance enrollment support	Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and complementary behavioral therapy for substance use	Transgender Health committed to improving the health and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse communities
Dental care , including cleanings, oral health screenings, x-rays, fillings, and aesthetic consultations and tooth whitening	Housing services and rental assistance referrals	Needle Exchange , Narcan education and distribution for overdose prevention	Reproductive Health and OB/GYN care

Evening appointments are available for Medical Care. Episodic care appointments are available Monday – Saturday.

After-hours clinical on-call support for urgent health concerns. Call 617.267.0900 and follow the prompts to reach the on-call service.



Please ask us about how the [Fenway Pharmacy](#) can discreetly deliver or mail your medication to your home or workplace free of charge.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This checklist is an optional tool for new patients seeking HIV medical care at Fenway Health. We know the beginnings of any new diagnosis can be overwhelming and hope that this checklist can help you keep track of who you might be meeting as you establish care, as well as some of the key tasks your care team will help you carry out. You can use the blank date fields to note your upcoming appointment dates.

First Appointment with Primary Care Provider

Appointment Date: _____ Time: _____

If you are new to HIV care at Fenway, here is what to expect:

- ☐ Meet with your primary care provider (PCP)
- ☐ You may also meet with one of our Infectious Disease specialists to optimize your HIV care
- ☐ Discuss medications, how they work, U=U
- ☐ Are you ready to start medication? If so, choose a pharmacy
- ☐ Ask for connections to other services, such as Behavioral Health, Financial Assistance, or either Community Health Worker programs
- ☐ Something missing? Talk to your nurse or community health worker!
- ☐ **Next Steps**
 - ☐ Get labs done (your provider will order your labs during your first medical visit)
 - ☐ Pick up medications from the pharmacy of your choice, or have them delivered to your home

After Your First Appointment

What to expect in the first weeks of treatment and care:

- ☐ Expect communication from your care team regarding your follow up appointment. If you do not have a follow up appointment scheduled, please feel free to call the Medical Call Center for further assistance



1 - 3 months

Appointment Date: _____ Time: _____

- ☐ Meet with your provider 1 month after starting medications-review adherence and tolerance
- ☐ Have labs drawn to ensure your treatment is working well for you
- ☐ Update immunizations as needed
- ☐ Review your recent labs with **Care Team Nurses** or **PCP** via phone or MyChart
- ☐ Review other health needs: dental exam, eye exam, nutrition, sleep

4 - 6 Months

Appointment Date: _____ Time: _____

- ☐ Meet with PCP/Care Team Nurses, as needed for medication adherence
- ☐ Have labs drawn
- ☐ Review labs to monitor progress
- ☐ Discuss medication refill needs

Contacting your Primary Care Team: Please use this space to write down the names and contact information for your care team. Once you sign up for MyChart, you can send non-urgent messages to your care team if you prefer messaging over calling. A member of your team will typically reply within a few business days.

My PCP's Name is:



HIV Basics

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. This is a virus that may weaken a person's immune system by destroying important cells (CD4 cells) that fight disease and infection.

There is currently no effective cure for HIV, but with proper medical care HIV can be controlled. People with HIV who get effective HIV treatment can live long, healthy lives and protect their partners. In fact, newer data suggests that life expectancy of people living with HIV who are on medication is the same as those who do not have HIV.

Receiving an HIV diagnosis can be life changing. You may feel many emotions—sadness, hopelessness, or anger. Your care team at Fenway Health can help you work through the early stages of your diagnosis. Your provider will work with you to help you understand how HIV might affect your overall health and health conditions specific to you.

Information provided in this section is meant to be for general reference. For specific questions about your health, please speak with your care team.

Living a Healthy Life with HIV

- Access medical care and [take medicine to treat HIV](#) (called *antiretroviral therapy* or ART).
- Taking HIV medicine can reduce the amount of HIV in the blood (called *viral load*).
- HIV medicine can make the viral load very low (called *viral suppression*).
 - An HIV viral load is defined as undetectable when you have less than 200 copies of HIV per milliliter of blood.
- HIV medicine can make the viral load so low that a test can't detect it (called an *undetectable viral load*).

Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)

- Most people can get to an undetectable level of virus within a few months with proper medication
 - If HIV is ever detectable in your viral load, it is important to take precautions, such as consistent condom use during sexual activities and avoiding the sharing



of injection equipment. Keep in mind that HIV is transmitted (spread) through blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk. It cannot be transmitted by saliva, tears, sharing food, or toilet seats.

- Getting and keeping an undetectable viral load (or staying virally suppressed) is the best thing you can do to stay healthy.
- Having an undetectable viral load also helps prevent transmission to others. In fact, if you have an undetectable viral load, you have effectively no risk of transmitting HIV to an HIV-negative partner through sex.



Becoming undetectable starts with HIV treatment.

LET'S STOP HIV TOGETHER

  

 <p>If you are living with HIV, the most important thing you can do is to get on HIV treatment.</p>	 <p>Achieving and maintaining an undetectable viral load prevents HIV transmission to your HIV-negative partner through sex.</p>
 <p>The sooner you get on treatment, the sooner you can reach an undetectable viral load.</p>	 <p>You and your partner may also consider adding other prevention options such as condoms or pre-exposure prophylaxis or PrEP.</p>
 <p>Staying healthy is the ultimate goal of HIV treatment, and being undetectable is one of the best things people with HIV can do to stay healthy.</p>	 <p>If you're taking medicine to treat HIV, visit your healthcare provider regularly and always take your medicine as directed to keep your viral load as low as possible. To find a healthcare provider near you, visit locator.hiv.gov.</p>

HIV TREATMENT WORKS. STAY IN CARE AND LIVE WELL.

cdc.gov/HIVTreatmentWorks



Other Ways to Maintain a Healthy Life with HIV

Diet & Nutrition

Balanced nutrition supports overall health and helps maintain the immune system.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Good mental health will help you live your life to the fullest and is essential to successfully living with HIV.

- Living with HIV can be a source of major stress.
- “Internalized stigma” or “self-stigma” happens when a person takes in the negative ideas and stereotypes about people living with HIV and starts to apply them to themselves. HIV internalized stigma can lead to feelings of shame, fear of disclosure, isolation, and despair.
- HIV may challenge your sense of well-being or complicate existing mental health conditions.
- One of the most common mental health conditions that people with HIV face is depression.
- People living with HIV may find that they cope with their diagnosis in different ways. One way that an individual may cope is through increased alcohol or other substances. For more information, check out the section below entitled, “Substance Use Treatment”

Fenway Health offers mental / behavioral health care that is coordinated with your primary care team. Your healthcare provider, social worker, or community health worker can help you connect to mental health care at Fenway and/or through your local community.

If you are interested in connecting with a Fenway therapist, please call 617.927.6202 or visit our website, <https://fenwayhealth.org/care/behavioral-health/>



Substance Use Treatment

Fenway health patients can access substance use support and treatment through the following programs.

- [Addiction Recovery and Wellness Program](#) - Fenway Health's Behavioral Health Department offers counseling and support groups designed to help with addiction issues, especially for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.
- [Medication Assisted Treatment \(MAT\)](#) - At Fenway Health, we understand that there are different paths to recovery, and we are dedicated to providing effective treatment for Substance Use Disorder including Suboxone, Sublocade, and Vivitrol.
 - MAT is effective. Medications like Suboxone, Sublocade, and Vivitrol empower people to reclaim their lives and rejoin their families, jobs, and communities.
 - MAT at Fenway is incorporated into primary care, which allows you to receive all of your care in one place, and we have an on-site pharmacy.
 - We offer rapid enrollment so that you can get started with MAT quickly. **Call 617.927.MAT1 (6281) to learn more.**
- [Access: Drug User Health](#) - this program, located in Central Sq., Cambridge, offers drop-in safe syringe exchange, Hep C and STI testing for people who inject drugs, overdose prevention, and health navigation services.

Support Groups

At Fenway

- Fenway's Behavioral Health Department offers a variety of short-term psychotherapy groups as well as longer-term psychotherapy groups for many mental health needs.
- Please visit the Fenway Health website's page for group therapy programs to learn more about what types of support groups are available to you:
<https://fenwayhealth.org/care/behavioral-health/support-groups/>



Boston-area

- Fenway also partners with Boston's Long-Term Survivors Support Group (LTSSG). LTSSG welcomes diversity and currently seeks new members.
 - Meetings occur on the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month in the Copley Square area.
 - There is no cost to participate. For more information, contact Ethan at ethan_herschman@yahoo.com.

Exercise

Exercise and physical activity are part of a healthy lifestyle for everyone, including those living with HIV. Benefits to exercise include improved strength and mobility, improved lung capacity, stress reduction, boosting your mood, maintaining a healthy weight, improving your sleep, and improving your overall physical health. Physical activity can also help reduce your risk for some of the health conditions that may affect people living with HIV such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, and even some types of cancer.

Studies have shown that moderate exercise three times a week, for 45 minutes each session, over 10 weeks, significantly improves the nervous system and blood circulation in people living with HIV. According to the US Dept. of Health and Human Services, adults need at least 150–300 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity—biking, brisk walking, or fast dancing. Adults also need to do muscle-strengthening activities such as weightlifting, push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, etc. at least twice a week.

New to exercise? Consult your physician to be sure that an exercise routine can be undertaken safely.

Smoking Cessation

Quitting smoking can be challenging under any circumstances—especially during stressful periods, such as being diagnosed with HIV. While smoking negatively impacts everyone's health, those living with HIV are at a higher risk for developing smoking-related illnesses. Fenway Health offers resources that can help you quit. Here are a few suggestions that may be helpful:



- Ask your PCP about medications and support to quit.
- Fenway Health offers [acupuncture treatment](#), which is a safe and natural way to help you quit smoking. Treatments can reduce nicotine cravings as well as the anxiety and irritability that often coincide with the acute phase of withdrawal. Acupuncture can be used in conjunction with other modalities to help you quit smoking including nicotine patches, gum, medications, and other therapies.
- Use mindfulness techniques to change your perspective over time.
- Find and applaud your “wins” while you quit smoking:
 - Track how much money you’re saving by not smoking.
 - Consider how much better your clothing, home, etc. smell.
 - Notice the increase in your endurance levels.
 - Notice your lack of worry about where to smoke.
 - Find other ways to reduce stress.
- Engage your support system to help you achieve your goal of becoming tobacco free.
- Avoid activities associated with tobacco use for a period of time.

Your Fenway Health Primary Care Provider can make a referral to our acupuncture for you. Once you have a referral, call 617.927.6188 to make an appointment.



Medications

The [Fenway Pharmacy](#) is a community pharmacy that helps treat complex medical conditions including (but not limited to) HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and all your pharmacy needs. Patients can find hands-on support and educational services at our pharmacy. Fenway Pharmacy is led by dedicated pharmacists who are experts on your medications. They review the medications you receive for your safety and their effectiveness for your care. Our pharmacists work in close partnership with your healthcare team to monitor your progress. As part of the Fenway Health clinic, we can review your medical chart to review drug interactions, monitor your labs for safety, and easily communicate with your healthcare team.

At Fenway Pharmacy, we are by your side throughout your treatment.

Our staff are here to:

- Teach you about your medications, side effects, interactions and monitoring, and answer your medication-related questions
- Check side effects, interactions, and outcomes of the medications
- Review your Fenway medical chart and monitor your progress alongside your clinical providers at Fenway Health
- Perform periodic assessments of your current HIV regimen and coordinate with your providers
- Work with prescribers and insurance companies to try to obtain medication coverage for non-formulary medications
- Coordinate benefits and find financial assistance when needed
- Make refill reminder calls to ensure you always have enough medication on hand
- Offer advice to help prevent and manage side effects
- Fenway Pharmacy provides fast, confidential delivery and shipping at no cost to you, Monday thru Friday. Same day delivery available in the Boston area (limitations apply)

Please call 617.927.6330 to access our pharmacy services, including refills and prior authorizations.



Aging with HIV

LGBTQIA+ Aging Project

Fenway Health's LGBTQIA+ Aging Project works toward equity, inclusion, and community for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual older adults, ensuring that they can age with the dignity and respect they deserve. They offer support for older LGBTQIA+ adults, including:

- A weekly Zoom drop-in group
- LGBTQIA+ bereavement support groups
- Community meal sites across Massachusetts

You can learn more about these programs online at lgbtagingproject.org.

Other Resources for Older Adults Living with HIV

Ethos is a private, not-for-profit organization that promotes the independence, dignity, and well-being of the elderly and disabled through the coordination and delivery of high-quality, affordable home and community-based care, including a Meals on Wheels program in the greater Boston area. More information is available online at ethocare.org.

You can find information about other Massachusetts programs for seniors online at mass.gov/topics/seniors.

Vision/Optometry

At Fenway Health, we are experts in [eye care](#) for people living with HIV. HIV can affect your eyes in many ways including infections, inflammation, or blood vessel damage. However, HIV-related eye disorders become less common the more the condition is under control. It is important that everyone living with HIV gets an annual dilated eye examination with an optometrist or ophthalmologist to check for signs of HIV-related eye disease.

HIV-related eye disorders do not always cause outward signs, but in some cases, you might experience redness, eye pain, blurriness, double vision, or seeing floaters and flashes. If any of these symptoms occur, you should call your eye care provider right away.

To schedule an Optometry appointment at Fenway Health, please call 617.927.6190



Dentistry

Proper dental care is an extremely important part of your holistic HIV care regimen. After your initial diagnosis of HIV, you should visit your dentist for a comprehensive oral exam. At Fenway Health, we are experts in [oral care](#) for people living with HIV.

A person's mouth is one of the first parts of the body to be impacted when a person is living with HIV. Inadequate dental care can lead to pain, tooth loss, trouble chewing, and/or swallowing. This may prevent you from taking your HIV medication and lead to trouble eating and absorbing enough essential nutrients, which can affect the absorption of your HIV medications.

Most oral health problems related to HIV are treatable. Talk to your dentist about which treatment is best for you. Prevention is the best medicine:

- Visit your dentist for regularly scheduled appointments
- Brush and floss your teeth twice daily for two minutes
- Take your HIV medicine on schedule
- Tell your doctor if your HIV medicine is causing dry mouth and ask what treatment is best for you.

If you do not have a regular dentist, ask your primary care provider for a referral or call 617.927.6127 for an appointment.



Other Considerations

Disclosure

Your health information is private, and, in general, you have the right to decide when and how you wish to share it.

Here are some situations where your HIV status may be relevant, along with some tips for how to navigate these scenarios:

Sex or Injection Partners

Having a conversation with your partners before engaging in sexual activity or sharing injection equipment can help prevent the spread of HIV. It also allows your partners to make decisions that can protect their health including talking to their health care provider about starting HIV prevention medication (PrEP).

Here Are a Few Ways to Let Your Partners Know

- [Tell Your Partner](#) is a free service that allows you to anonymously inform your partners of exposure to an STD without disclosing your identity. They can provide your partners with information on local HIV testing centers and also have tips on how you can have conversations regarding your HIV status going forward.
- Most state health departments offer a resource called “Partner Services”. Through this service, health department staff tells your current and former partners that they may have been exposed to HIV, without sharing your identity. Alternatively, this service can provide assistance with informing your partners by assisting you, in-person, with these conversations which is known as dual referral. The health department will provide your partners with testing, counseling, and referrals for other services. For additional information, you can call Massachusetts Partner Services Program (PSP) at 617.983.6999.

Health Care Providers

Your HIV status is protected under health care privacy laws. It is important that your health care team knows about your HIV status so that they can provide you with the most appropriate care.

Employers

You are not required to disclose your HIV status to your employer.



Laws Protect People Living with HIV and AIDS

If you are living with HIV or AIDS, you are protected against discrimination on the basis of your HIV diagnosis under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The ADA also protects your family and friends from discrimination because of your HIV status, based on their association with you.

The ADA prohibits discrimination by employers, places of public accommodation, and state and local government entities. Examples of entities that may be covered by the ADA and/or Section 504 include hospitals, clinics, social services agencies, drug treatment centers, nursing homes, doctors' offices, dentists' offices, daycares, public pools, and fitness gyms.

Our Legal Assistance team is here to help you. Give them a call at 617.437.6200 or visit our website <https://aac.org/legal-services-client-advocacy/>

Other Resources

Here are some additional resources to help you navigate disclosing your HIV status:

- <https://www.poz.com/basics/hiv-basics/disclosure>
- <https://www.aidsmap.com/about-hiv/pros-and-cons-disclosing-your-hiv-status>
- <https://www.hivlawandpolicy.org/issues/confidentiality-and-disclosure>



Fenway Health Consumer Advisory Board (CAB)

Make Your Voice Heard: Join the Fenway Health HIV Consumer Advisory Board!

Are you passionate about improving healthcare services for people living with HIV/AIDS? Do you want to make a real difference in your community? The Fenway Health Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) is seeking new members to help shape the future of HIV care and services!

As a CAB member, you will:

- Provide valuable input on policies and programs that directly impact HIV/AIDS care at Fenway Health
- Help ensure healthcare services remain high-quality, culturally sensitive, and client-centered
- Join a diverse community of advocates committed to improving healthcare outcomes
- Have a direct voice in the development of services that affect you and others

We welcome interest from:

- Current Fenway Health patients (minimum 12 months of care)
- Individuals living in New England
- People of all ages, races, ethnic groups, sexual orientations, and gender expressions

Your Contribution Matters! To honor your time and input, members receive a \$50 honorarium for each meeting they attend.

2025 Meeting Schedule: Meetings are held every other month on the following months:

- January
- March
- May
- July
- September
- November

Your lived experience matters! We are committed to maintaining a board that reflects the diverse experiences and skills of our community members.

Getting Started:

- 1) Attend a meeting as a guest to learn more about our work



- 2) Join us for a 2-year term with the possibility of renewal

Together, we can make healthcare better for everyone in our community. Your perspective is valuable, and your voice deserves to be heard. **Interested? Contact the staff liason, Luchiano Montero at lmontero@fenwayhealth.org, to learn more about attending our next meeting as a guest.**

Research

In the three decades since the first cases of AIDS were reported, Federal investments in basic, biomedical, behavioral, and social science research have led to numerous HIV prevention interventions and life-saving treatments.

The Fenway Institute (TFI) is an interdisciplinary center for research, education, training and policy development with a pioneering history of community and academic collaborations. Our integration with Fenway Health's clinical services has enabled technology and health information innovation, as well as real-time clinical interventions.

TFI is committed to the specific health needs of sexual and gender minorities (SGM) and people affected by HIV. They work with diverse community and professional stakeholders; conduct and disseminate research; design and deliver education, training, and technical assistance; develop and promote empirically-supported public policies; and work to cultivate and nurture a multidisciplinary and diverse community of faculty and staff. Honoring the intersectionality of identities and lived experience, and taking action to advance racial equity and social justice are central components of this commitment.

How to Get Involved

The Fenway Institute is always looking for community members who want to make a difference in LGBTQ+ & HIV health and wellness by participating in research.

If you are interested in learning more about research at Fenway Health, or want to find out if you may be eligible to participate in any of our studies, [please fill out this contact form](https://fenwayhealth.org/the-fenway-institute/research/current-studies/) at <https://fenwayhealth.org/the-fenway-institute/research/current-studies/> or contact TFI directly at 617.927.6450 or bethechange@fenwayhealth.org.



Research Study Highlight



The CNICS study directly reflects the outcomes of clinical decisions and management options made daily in the care of HIV infected individuals and is helping to evaluate HIV treatment interventions under the real-world conditions of a primary care practice. Please contact 857.313.6716 to learn more about CNICS and how to join.

External Resources

Victory Programs – Keys To Home (KTH)

The Keys To Home (KTH) team believes that everyone deserves a place to call home. Many of our clients experience barriers accessing and retaining affordable housing. Using the Housing First model, the KTH program helps connect people living with HIV/AIDS, to a range of housing services and options, including transitional and permanent affordable housing, supportive congregate and scattered site housing, and rental and utility assistance. The Housing Search Case Managers work with clients for 12 months to help them obtain safe, stable, and affordable housing that best meets their needs and goals. Our Housing Stabilization Case Managers provide up to 12 months of support around stabilizing the clients' home, from income navigation, food security, budget management, bill management etc.

To get connected, call or make an appointment with a Community Health Worker for a referral to Keys to Home.

