

ABOUT THIS PROGRAMME

The Sizwe Wellcare Programme is an HIV/AIDS disease management programme which is available to all members and corporate client employees who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

THE BENEFITS OF JOINING THIS PROGRAMME INCLUDE:

- **Access to benefits** that cover the cost of HIV/AIDS related treatments, including antiretroviral medicines and blood tests.
- **Access to qualified specialised managers** who provide counseling, advice and support.
- **Access to dedicated, confidential help and fax line.**
- **A holistic management approach** as Sizwe is linked to other wellness and healthcare programmes.

All contact is handled with strict confidentiality and professionalism to ensure you peace of mind.

HOW TO REGISTER

Call the confidential Sizwe Wellcare Programme line to request an application form (your doctor can also request this on your behalf):

0860 103 454

Sizwe Medical Fund's Wellcare programme is managed by Sechaba Medical Solutions. For more information please contact us on:

EMAIL US:
wellcarequeries@sechabamedical.co.za

FAX US: 011 221 5235

VISIT US: 7 West Street, Houghton, Johannesburg

WEBSITE: www.sizwe.co.za

OFFICE HOURS: 8:00am - 4:00pm (Mon - Fri)



YOUR HEALTH IN CARING HANDS



BECAUSE...

CARING

COMES NATURALLY TO US

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that destroys the body's immune system, making it harder to fight off germs and infections. The virus is found in body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid and breast milk.

Once the virus attacks the immune system and the CD4 count falls below 200, the person may experience severe opportunistic infections and is then said to have AIDS.

How is HIV SPREAD?



- Through unprotected sex with someone who is HIV+
- By receiving a transfusion of infected blood
- From a pregnant woman to her unborn baby, as well as during childbirth
- During breastfeeding by an infected mother
- By sharing needles and syringes with someone who is infected.

How is HIV PREVENTED?

Practice the "ABC" of safer sex to minimise your chances of contracting HIV/AIDS:

A - Abstain **B - Be faithful** **C - Condomise**

Condoms can prevent initial and subsequent HIV infection as well as sexually transmitted diseases. Even if you are already HIV+, you can be re-infected with a different strain of the virus.

How does the disease PROGRESS?

1. Acute stage: This is when a person is first exposed to the virus (eg. through unprotected sex with someone who is HIV+). However, you do not always develop antibodies straight away, so an HIV test at this early stage (in the "window period") might be negative.

2. Asymptomatic stage: In this stage, which can last up to ten years, the infected person looks and feels healthy and might not realise they are infected. An HIV test would however be positive.

3. Symptomatic stage: At this stage the virus has caused enough damage to the immune system that the patient starts suffering from infections like recurring pneumonia and diarrhoea, or TB(tuberculosis).

4. Advanced stage/AIDS: As the immune system becomes weaker, the person suffers increasingly severe infections and some cancers like Kaposi Sarcoma.

How is HIV TREATED?

Treatment - Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) - normally starts when an HIV+ person's CD4 cell count drops below 350 and/or if they experience any AIDS-defining illnesses.

Antiretroviral therapy is only effective when a correct combination of medicine is taken at the correct dose at prescribed times. It is of the **utmost importance** to continue with ART even when one begins to feel better. ART does not kill the virus, but suppresses it.

Monitoring blood tests are done every four months. These tests form a vital part of the treatment, and monitor both the CD4 count and the viral load.

KNOW YOUR STATUS -

GET TESTED

UNHEALTHY

SAY YES TO LIFE!

How is HIV diagnosed?

Different types of blood tests are done in order to detect HIV:

- 1. Diagnostic tests:** These detect whether or not the virus and its antibodies are in the person's blood.
- 2. Confirmation tests:** In certain cases, these are done to confirm a positive result.