



What You Need to Know About

Injectable Human Immunodeficiency Viruses (HIV) Treatment:

ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY (ART)

This Fact Sheet shares clear, culturally relevant, and respectful information on injectable HIV treatment for Indigenous women in all their diversity, including those who are incarcerated.

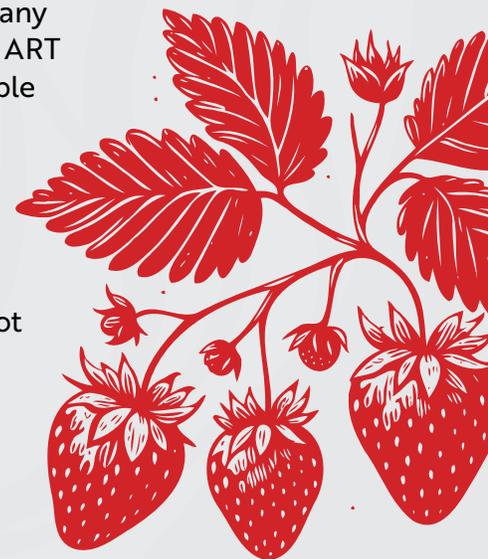
Our health is sacred, this fact sheet is meant to honour Indigenous women's strength & right to wellness

What is ART?

- **ART** stands for **Antiretroviral Therapy**. It is used by people living with HIV to manage their health¹
- For many years, daily pills were the only option. Now, new long-acting injectable treatments are available in some places¹
- Is a combination of medications used to treat HIV¹
- A long-acting injectable form is now available and only needs to be given every 2 months, oral pills are taken daily¹

Why take ART?:

- Stigma, poverty and incarceration have impacted Indigenous women's access to HIV treatments—this helps frame why accessible treatment options matter¹
- Prevents HIV from reproducing and supports immune system health¹
- Not a cure but many people who take ART reach undetectable levels of HIV¹
- Undetectable means the virus is at such low levels in the body that it cannot be transmitted to others



Benefits of Injectable ART:

- Prevents HIV from multiplying, which reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) to low or even undetectable levels¹
- Produces more CD4 cells, CD4 cells are part of the immune system that helps fight infections
- Reduces the risk of life-threatening infections and lowers the chance of developing AIDs (Advanced HIV diseases)¹
- Lowers risk of developing certain cancers that are more common among people with HIV⁵ Such as:
 - ↳ Kaposi Sarcoma
 - ↳ Lymphoma Burkitt
 - ↳ Lymphoma Immunoblastic
 - ↳ Lymphoma of central nervous system
 - ↳ Cervical cancer⁵
- When your viral is undetectable, you cannot pass HIV to others through sex or shared drug use
- This is called U = U,
Undetectable = Untransmutable

If you have questions about ART or its side effects, speak with a nurse, doctor, or support worker. **You have the right to understand your health care.**

Access & Coverage:

- Six provinces and territories currently provide ART at no cost to anyone who needs it:
 1. Alberta
 2. British Columbia
 3. Saskatchewan
 4. Northwest Territories
 5. Nunavut
 6. Prince Edward Island⁴
- If you live in a province without full coverage you might have to pay some fees unless you have other coverage⁴
- If you receive benefits through NHB (Non-Insured Health benefits) or are on income support you likely don't have to pay⁴
- If you are incarcerated, you may be eligible for ART through institutional health services - ask your health or social service provider⁴

If you are incarcerated, ask to speak to the prison healthcare provider. **You have the right to access HIV care, including injectable ART, if it's available.**

You deserve respectful, non-judgmental care, ART is one way to protect your **spirit, strength and future**
To learn more connect with an Indigenous health care worker, community agency or peer support person

REFERENCES

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