

Disclosing your HIV status

Who we are

Bankmed Medical Scheme (referred to as ‘the Scheme’), registration number 1279. This is a non-profit organisation, registered with the Council for Medical Schemes. Discovery Health (Pty) Ltd (referred to as ‘the administrator’) is a separate company and an authorised financial services provider (registration number 1997/013480/07). Discovery Health is responsible for the administration of Bankmed Medical Scheme.

You do not have to disclose your HIV status

Not everyone needs to know that you are HIV positive. Who you decide to tell depends entirely on you. It will help to tell the people who you know you can rely upon for care and support throughout your treatment.

You may want to confide in a close friend, family member or a minister of your church for support to help you deal with the issues you face when diagnosed with HIV. Counsellors and other healthcare professionals can also offer support to HIV-positive people or you may be comfortable speaking to a traditional healer or faith healer about how you feel.

It really isn’t important who you speak to – but it should be someone you can trust and who will support you. You first need to strengthen your mind and support structures. Then work on strengthening your immune system to fight the disease.

Remember, you don’t need to be ashamed – anyone can get HIV

Telling people you are HIV positive

You may find it easier to write down a list of the people you want to tell. The list may include your parents, children, close friends and people with whom you work or attend school.



Start with a general approach

Once you have decided who you would like to share your news with, it may be better to start the discussion on HIV and AIDS in general. This way you are empowering the person with information about HIV and, if the person has the wrong information, you can give them the true facts about HIV and AIDS. You can give them a book to read on HIV and AIDS and can invite them to talk about the conditions.

Many people have incorrect ideas about how HIV is spread and this makes them afraid of people who are HIV positive. By talking to them and giving them information about HIV and AIDS you are helping them to deal with their fears regarding HIV and AIDS by providing the true facts.

You can join a support group

Find out from your local clinic or church if there are any support groups for HIV-positive people in your area. At these meetings you may discuss any problems and fears you may have. If there are no support groups, think about starting your own. You can leave your name with the clinic so that other HIV-positive people can contact you. Then you can start your own group in your area to help others overcome their fears.

Benefits of disclosing your status

Increased opportunities for social support	✓
Improved access to necessary medical care, including antiretroviral treatment	✓
Increased opportunities to discuss and implement HIV risk reduction with partners	✓
Increased opportunities to plan for the future	✓

Disclaimer

The content, sources and references (collectively, “the content”) contained in this communication is provided to you at your request. The content is for information purposes only and does not substitute or replace the clinical expertise and judgement of your healthcare professional.

Decisions about the diagnosis and treatment of any medical condition always requires the professional opinion of your healthcare professional and therefore no such advice should be disregarded or delayed, based on this content. The clinical management of any condition needs to be made in consultation with your healthcare professional and not based on this content.

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Complaints process

You may lodge a complaint or query with Bankmed Medical Scheme directly on 0800 BANKMED (0800 226 5633) or address a complaint in writing directly to the Principal Officer. Should your complaint remain unresolved, you may lodge a formal dispute by following Bankmed Medical Scheme’s internal disputes process.

Members, who wish to approach the Council for Medical Schemes for assistance, may do so in writing to: Council for Medical Schemes Complaints Unit, Block A, Eco Glades 2 Office Park, 420 Witch-Hazel Avenue, Eco Park, Centurion, 0157 or via e-mail at complaints@medicalschemes.com. Customer Care Centre: 0861 123 267/website www.medicalschemes.com

