



Cure: Immunotherapy

An immunotherapy combination may help maintain HIV remission after stopping antiretrovirals.

February 16, 2026 By [Liz Highleyman](#)

An immunotherapy combination may help maintain HIV remission after stopping antiretrovirals, a recent study shows. HIV inserts its genetic blueprints into human cells, establishing a long-lasting reservoir that makes a true cure nearly impossible, but experimental approaches may help limit viral rebound after treatment interruption, known as a functional cure. A small clinical trial tested a therapeutic vaccine, two broadly neutralizing antibodies (bnAbs) and lefitolimod, a toll-like TLR9 agonist that boosts immune response. Researchers previously reported that seven of the 10 participants had delayed viral rebound to lower-than-expected levels after treatment interruption, including one who is maintaining viral control four years later. Robust proliferation of activated CD8 killer T cells was correlated with lower viral load. While delayed viral rebound is expected with bnAbs, the slower rebound rate and ability to sustain a low viral load for several months suggest the vaccine and immune-modulating drug may have additional effects.

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