# Communicating Undetectable Equals Untransmittable

Be precise and empowering when sharing U=U

February 18, 2019

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The fact that people living with HIV on effective treatment do not sexually transmit the virus is known as U=U. This information can transform lives when communicated properly. It's important to be precise and empowering.

## U=U Belongs to Everyone

U=U is based on the science of treatment as prevention (TasP). In 2016, Julio Montaner, MD, the pioneer of TasP, was one of the first endorsers of U=U. More than 800 organizations from nearly 100 countries, including dozens of U.S. public health departments, now use the phrase.

## Make It a Priority

As you create statements, videos, speeches and newsletters, put U=U up front so it has the best chance of being heard. U=U applies to many areas, including HIV stigma, sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention, HIV criminalization and access to treatment and services.

## The Basics Are Easy

Focus on adherence, regular viral load testing and engagement in care. The basic rules are not complex. It's about TLC. Treatment: stay on treatment as prescribed. Labs: get labs done regularly. Connection: stay connected to care.

Other items to keep in mind: The viral threshold for U=U is under 200 copies per milliliter, synonymous with viral suppression. U=U only prevents HIV. Condoms help prevent other sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. U=U applies only to sexual transmission, not to breast feeding or needle sharing. U=U may not exempt people from HIV disclosure laws.

## Be Clear and Consistent

Use strong phrases such as "can't pass it on," "cannot transmit," "no risk" and "effectively no risk." These are in effect the same risk assessment. You can also say "zero risk." Avoid phrases that convey even slight risk, like "nearly impossible," "extremely low" or "makes it hard to transmit." Any perceived window, no matter how slight, may still be considered a risk.

Go to PreventionAccess.org and POZ.com/Undetectable for more information.

Source: Adapted from “Communication Tips: A Dear Colleague Letter from the Executive Director” by Bruce Richman of Prevention Access Campaign.

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