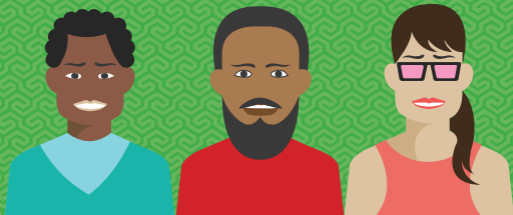


MODERN ART FOR SOUTH AFRICA

STARTING ART

Everyone with HIV
needs to take HIV treatment
– called antiretroviral
therapy, ART or ARVs

NOVEMBER 2022



DOES ART REALLY WORK?



YES!

It will keep
you healthy.

Your life
expectancy will
be similar to
before you
were living
with HIV.

It also
reduces
risk to your
partners.

About 5.7 million people have started ART in South Africa.

ART works for any age or gender. It works for adults, adolescents, children and babies.

Taking ART exactly as prescribed reduces HIV in your body to tiny amounts (called “undetectable”).

Even though you will still be living with HIV, you can expect a long and healthy life.



**DO ALL PEOPLE LIVING
WITH HIV NEED ART?**

YES

South African
guidelines
recommend ART
for everyone
living with HIV,
whatever their
CD4 count or
viral load.





**This is the same
across the world.**

**Treatment works and
it is easy to take.**

**ART usually means
taking only one
pill a day.**

**If you are not on
ART, the virus
can damage
your health
even when
you feel well.**

ART FOR

SOUTH AFRICA

ART is usually three ARVs in one pill – called a fixed-dose combination.



The combination of ARVs is: tenofovir, lamivudine and dolutegravir. This combination is called TLD.

The older first-line combination was based on a drug called efavirenz.

WHAT IS DOLUTEGRAVIR?

🔊 *dol-you-TEG-rah-veer*

Dolutegravir is a type of ARV called an integrase inhibitor.



WHY IS DOLUTEGRAVIR

BETTER THAN EFAVIRENZ?

Dolutegravir has fewer side effects than efavirenz – so it is even easier for people to take and for treatment to be effective.

It is harder to get resistance to dolutegravir than to efavirenz. The new combination of ARVs also comes in a smaller pill.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE

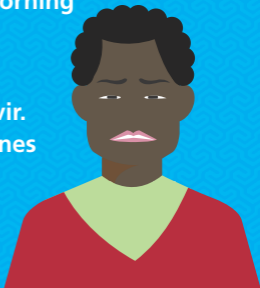
EFFECTS OF DOLUTEGRAVIR?

These are not common but can include mood changes and difficulty sleeping.

Occasionally people might need to change to another ARV.

Some people find it better to take dolutegravir in the morning than the evening.

Some people gain weight on dolutegravir. South African guidelines encourage everyone to eat a healthy diet and exercise.



DOLUTEGRAVIR

AND TB MEDICINE

Rifampicin, one of the medicines used in first-line TB treatment, can reduce the levels of other medicines, including dolutegravir.

This “interaction” between dolutegravir and rifampicin is overcome by adding an extra dolutegravir pill.

So dolutegravir is taken twice daily (once within TLD and once as a single dose).

See our booklet ART and TB.



OTHER MEDICINES AND SUPPLEMENTS

There are interactions between dolutegravir and some supplements, heartburn medicine, laxatives and multivitamins, including calcium supplements.

To overcome this DTG should be taken two hours before or six hours after these medicines.

Another important interaction is that DTG doubles levels of metformin – to treat type 2 diabetes – and requires careful monitoring.

IMBIZA

Less well understood are interactions with traditional herbal medicines or imbiza.



Traditional medicines are not tested or approved.

We do not know what imbiza can do.

They might weaken the effect of ARVs.

Using them together might make the ARVs or imbiza more toxic.

Do not take imbiza with ARVs.

ADHERENCE

Adherence is the most important thing you have to think about when you start ART.

If you are worried, there are a lot of ways to help.

Getting into a routine makes it easier.

Usually ART is one pill a day.





TESTS TO MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

CD4 COUNT

Your CD4 count tells you about your immune system.

The range for HIV negative adults is about 400 to 1600. Getting above 500 is considered normal.

Even with a very low CD4 count, ART can help your immune system recover.



VIRAL LOAD (VL)

This test shows how much virus is in a sample of blood.

On ART, viral load should be less than 50 copies/mL.

This is called undetectable and it makes HIV difficult to transmit.

Everyone with HIV needs to take ART, no matter what their CD4 or viral load is.

ART AND

PREGNANCY

All HIV positive pregnant and breastfeeding women should be started on lifelong ART, ideally the same day that pregnancy is confirmed.

We have also produced a booklet on taking ARVs for women who want to become pregnant.





Find out more about treatment
and the free app at:

www.modernartforsouthafrica.co.za

   @modernart4sa

