



COVID-19 HIV PREVENTION, TREATMENT, CARE AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS¹

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus



How does COVID-19 spread?

People can acquire COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.

Other people can then acquire COVID-19 by touching objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also acquire COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is assessing ongoing research on the ways COVID-19 is spread. For the latest information, see <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.

For many people, COVID-19 infection can be mild and they make a full recovery with minimal intervention. However, it can be much more serious for people with underlying health conditions, and people with weakened immune systems.



What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The main symptoms feel like the flu or a really bad cold:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing

Providing Comprehensive HIV¹ Services for and with People who Use Drugs During the COVID-19 Outbreak

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITIES IS ESSENTIAL IN ALL RESPONSE MEASURES



People who use drugs can be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 due to underlying health issues, stigma, social marginalization and higher economic and social vulnerabilities, including a lack of access to housing and health care.

People have the right to health even in countries under lockdown or where a state of emergency has been declared. This includes access to life-saving comprehensive HIV harm reduction¹ services and programmes.



The continuity and sustainability of comprehensive HIV¹, HCV and other low-threshold services for people who use drugs must be ensured during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Closing down services will only result in the over-crowding of those that stay open, which will increase transmission risks and impact on service quality.



Comprehensive HIV¹, HCV and other low-threshold services for people who use drugs should establish a safe working environment.

Adequate funding should be made available.



¹ WHO, UNODC, UNAIDS Technical Guide for Countries to Set Targets for Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care for Injecting Drug Users, 2012 revision, (Geneva, WHO, 2012)

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