

SERVICE PROVIDERS

What you need
to know about
**Undetectable =
Untransmittable**

U=U



A smiling man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing a blue t-shirt, is shown from the waist up. He is holding the hand of another person whose arm and hand are visible on the right side of the frame. The background is a solid light blue. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

INTRODUCTION

Service providers like you are critical to the health of our nation. You are a trusted advisor in your community. When you share information, people listen. Your words can motivate others to act.

This is why we want you to know about U=U.

This booklet provides information about U=U so you can share this message with your clients. Greater understanding of U=U among your clients, especially people living with HIV (PLHIV), can accelerate your impact on the HIV epidemic in Ghana.

U=U can motivate people to know their HIV status. U=U can encourage PLHIV to enroll in HIV treatment earlier and adhere to it longer. U=U can make your work easier, while contributing to a stronger, healthier Ghana.

Read on to learn more about U=U.

U=U

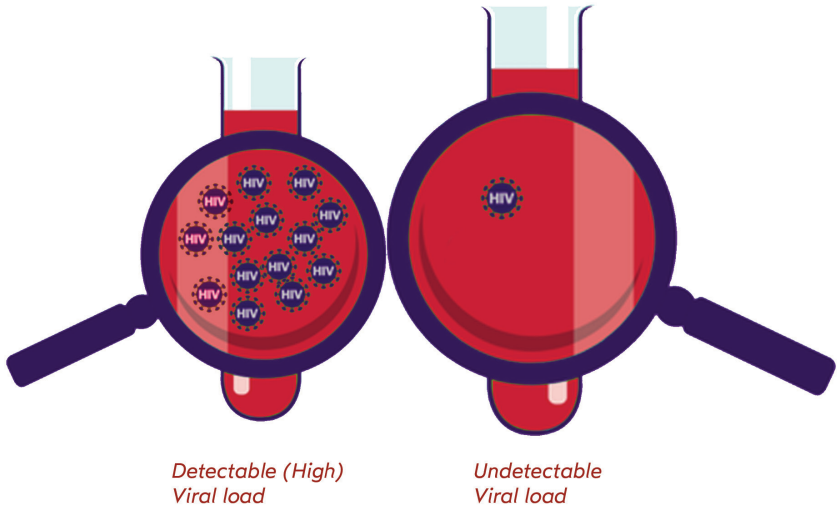
Undetectable = Untransmittable

A person living with HIV who has an “undetectable” viral load cannot transmit HIV to their HIV-negative partners through unprotected sex.

That’s
a bold
statement,
and you’re
probably
wondering:
what does
it really
mean?



Undetectable Viral Load



“Undetectable” is when the amount of HIV in someone’s blood is so low it cannot be measured by a standard blood test.

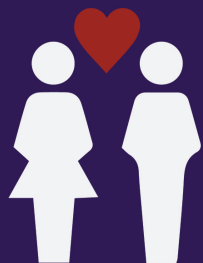
Four research studies conducted across 24 countries with over 4,200 serodiscordant couples concluded that when the HIV-positive partner's viral load is "undetectable" they cannot transmit HIV to their partner(s) through unprotected sex.

The virus is still in the blood but not in adequate quantities to be transmitted sexually.



24
Countries

Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa



4,200
couples

one HIV positive
and on treatment,
one HIV negative



transmissions

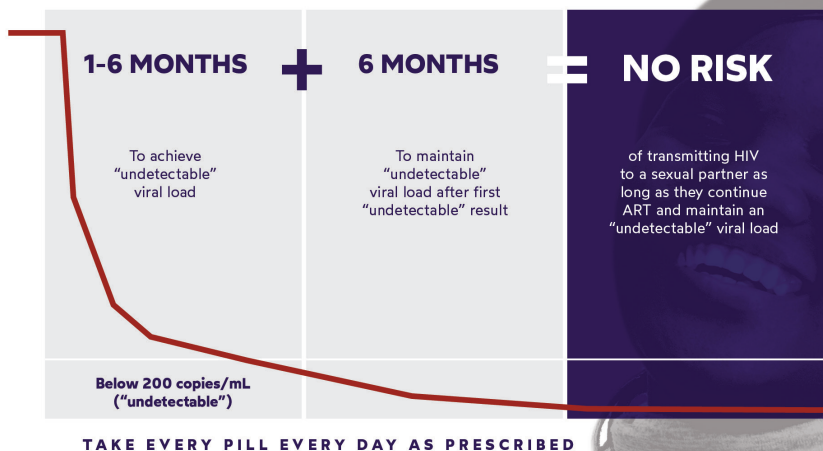
when HIV viral load was below 200 copies/mL.

GETTING TO AND STAYING **U=U**

A person living with HIV can get to, and stay, “undetectable” by taking their ARV medications every day as prescribed.

That’s right, we already have the tools to make U=U a reality in Ghana.

The global research defines “undetectable” as any HIV viral load below 200 copies/mL. Depending on the drug combination, it may take as long as six months of antiretroviral therapy for your client’s HIV viral load to drop below 200 copies/mL. They should get a laboratory test to confirm their viral load after taking their ARV medications for at least 6 months, and again after the next 6 months. Thereafter, continue to monitor your client’s viral load according to the national treatment guidelines.



To stay below 200 copies/mL (“undetectable”) your client must continue their antiretroviral therapy as prescribed. Some of your clients may experience brief viral increases called “blips.”

After a blip, viral loads return quickly to an “undetectable” level (anything below 200 copies/mL) without any change in therapy. Regardless, continue to monitor your client’s viral load according to the national treatment guidelines.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT U=U WITH YOUR CLIENTS

Talking to your clients about U=U can motivate them to know their HIV status and, if they are living with HIV, adhere to their antiretroviral therapy.

The idea that someone living with HIV, who is on treatment and “undetectable,” cannot transmit the virus to a sexual partner is revolutionary. The U=U message has the potential to reduce stigma, increase demand for HIV testing services and ART, and improve adherence.

We’re counting on you to spread the word.



What to say about U=U to clients who don’t know their HIV status

- U=U means “undetectable equals untransmittable.”
- A person living with HIV who has an “undetectable” viral load, cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.
- A person living with HIV can get to, and stay “undetectable” by taking their ARV medications as prescribed.
- Know your HIV status so you can take action to protect yourself and your sexual partner(s).

What to say about U=U to newly diagnosed HIV-positive clients



- U=U means “undetectable equals untransmittable.”
- A person living with HIV who has an “undetectable” viral load cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.
- You can get to, and stay “undetectable” by taking your ARV medications every day as prescribed.
- Enroll on antiretroviral therapy early, so you can achieve U=U quickly.



What to say about U=U to clients enrolled in antiretroviral therapy

- U=U means “undetectable equals untransmittable.”
- A person living with HIV who has an “undetectable” viral load, cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.
- You can get to “undetectable” by taking your ARV medications every day as prescribed.
- Keep taking your ARV medications every day as prescribed to stay “undetectable.”



NB: U=U does NOT protect against other sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies, so condoms are a must!



EXPRESSING OUR THANKS

You are an everyday hero. Every day you go to work, you make Ghana a better, healthier place for all.

Make U=U part of your everyday talk.

