

# Disclosing Your HIV Positive Status



## HIV/AIDS Information Sheet

### **What does "disclosing my HIV-positive status" mean?**

Disclosing your HIV-positive status means telling someone else that you are HIV-positive. Disclosing your HIV status to another person is often difficult, whether you're disclosing to a sexual partner, someone you inject drugs with, a friend, family member, employer or anyone else you decide to tell.

### **Can I still have sex if I have HIV or AIDS?**

Yes. People living with HIV/AIDS are entitled to an active, healthy sex life. However, you cannot put your partner at risk of infection with HIV. Because of the high risk for transmitting HIV. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that you must tell your sexual partner that you are HIV positive

### **What if the person I am having sex with doesn't want to use condoms?**

If your sexual partner does not want to use condoms, you are putting another person at risk of HIV infection. You are also putting yourself at risk for potential new infections.

Your partner must make his or her decision voluntarily, without coercion. He or she must also understand the risk of HIV transmission and not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

### **If I inject drugs, do I have to disclose my HIV status to the people I inject drugs with?**

Sharing injecting equipment with another person is high risk for transmitting HIV. If you inject drugs, it is important that you use a clean needle, syringe and other injecting equipment (such as spoons) every time.

If you do share injecting equipment with another person, then you must first tell him or her that you are HIV-positive. The person you are going to inject drugs with must understand the risk of HIV transmission and must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

### **What is the best way to disclose my HIV status before having sex or injecting drugs?**

It is usually easier to tell someone you are HIV positive before getting ready to have sex or inject drugs. Think over what you want to say, why you want to say it, and how you want to say it so you will feel more prepared when you disclose your status.

### **Do I have to disclose my HIV status to people other than sexual partners or people I inject drugs with?**

No. However, by disclosing your HIV status to friends or family, you can build a support network and feel less alone about being HIV-positive. Choosing the right time and place to disclose to others is important. You may feel vulnerable right after you disclose and you need to be prepared for both positive and negative reactions from the people you disclose to.

You will need to decide whether you can trust someone with the knowledge that you are HIV positive.

Telling others you are HIV-positive means you have less control over how that information is shared. Be clear with anyone you disclose to whether it is okay for them to tell other people that you are HIV-positive. Providing the people you disclose to with written information about HIV/AIDS can often be helpful.