

WORLD AIDS DAY THEME 2018

Know your status.

The theme of this year's World AIDS Day is "Know your status". The 30th anniversary of World AIDS Day will be marked on 1 December 2018. Since 1988, the AIDS response has made significant progress and today millions of people living with HIV are leading healthy and productive lives. But we still have miles to go, as the latest UNAIDS report shows, and one of the challenges remaining is knowledge of HIV status.

HIV testing is essential for expanding treatment and achieving the 90-90-90 targets. It also empowers people to make choices about HIV prevention, so that they can protect themselves and their loved ones.

Many barriers to HIV testing remain and UNAIDS estimates that more than 9.4 million people living with HIV still do not know their status. Stigma and discrimination deters people from taking an HIV test. Access to confidential HIV testing remains an issue of concern. Many people get tested only after becoming ill and symptomatic. This leads to HIV treatment being initiated late, undermining its many benefits for both treatment and prevention. At the same time, there are many new opportunities to expand access to HIV testing. Self-testing, community-based testing services and multidisease testing are helping people to know their HIV status.

HIV testing programmes must be expanded. For this, we need political will and investment, as well as novel and innovative approaches to HIV testing that are fully leveraged and taken to scale.



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