



FACT SHEET – 14 March 2014

## HIV: NOW THAT YOU KNOW...WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARTNER?

### Why should my sexual partner be told that I have HIV?

If you have HIV, all of the people you had sex with (vaginal, oral, or anal sex) since the virus entered your body, and anyone with whom you have shared needles may also be infected with the virus.

They should receive an HIV test right away.

They may not know they are infected. Many people who are infected with HIV do not notice any symptoms, until they become very ill. By learning they may also have HIV, they can receive the medical care they need.

Telling your sex or needle-sharing partners shows that you respect and care about them. It's the right thing to do.

Telling your partner may also prevent future misunderstandings or legal action.

Telling your partner can also protect their future partners (people like you) from getting their infection.

A trained Navy counselor can help you tell your partners. This person will listen to your concerns, protect your privacy and help you make a plan.

### How does this work?

There are a few ways to go about this. You might choose a different approach for each partner, depending on your relationships and what you feel will work best for you and for them. Your health care professional will discuss each of these with you and help you formulate a plan.

#### Option #1 - You can do it.

- Tell your partner that you have HIV and they may also have it.
- Say "HIV", and emphasize that it is very important they get tested promptly, even if they don't think they are infected.
- When speaking with your partner, a caring attitude is helpful, while a blaming attitude is not.
- Keep in mind that your partner, even if infected, may not know it. Some people may have HIV for long periods without having symptoms.
- You can work with your health care professional to follow-up with your partner(s) to ensure they actually get tested.

**Option #2 - We can do it for you.** With your permission, a trained health care professional informs your partner that someone with HIV has named them as a person who may also have HIV. This information is ideally shared face-to-face. The health care worker never discloses your name, but says only that someone who cares about them gave their name to so they can be offered an HIV test. The health care professional then helps your partner arrange testing.

**Option #3 - We can do it together.** You and your health care professional meet with your partner and tell them. This approach supports you and ensures your partner receives prompt and complete information and testing.

**Where can I get more information?** Your local health care provider or Navy **preventive medicine** office can help you with the notification of your sexual partner(s).

#### What does my partner need to know?

- You have HIV.
- They should get tested now for HIV, even if they have no symptoms.
- They should tell their doctor that they may have been exposed to HIV.