



Out of date
on HIV?

Get the facts at healthnz.govt.nz/HIV

The 80s Calling

A national campaign to update New Zealanders about HIV to reduce stigma

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

WHERE WE'RE STARTING FROM

Most of what people “know” about HIV is stuck in the 1980s

In the 1980s, HIV was frightening and often fatal, and public health messages at the time reflected that.

Those images stuck. Medicine moved on – public understanding largely didn't.

78%

of New Zealanders still hold misconceptions about HIV

Source: Verian baseline research



Outdated beliefs turn into everyday stigma

Fear stuck in the past

Perceptions of HIV remain “stuck in the past”, still shaping how people think and respond today.

Source: NZ Herald

Discomfort in daily life

Many New Zealanders remain uncomfortable with everyday interactions with people living with HIV.

Source: hivjustice.net

Myths about transmission

HIV cannot be passed on through touching, kissing or sharing food – yet many people still think it can.

Source: Stuff

Stigma stops people getting tested and talking openly – so it affects everyone, not just people living with HIV.

THE KEY MESSAGE

Stigma harms people – and it stops them getting tested

It stops people testing

Fear of being judged means people put off getting tested, so HIV goes undiagnosed for longer.

It delays treatment

People can hold back from starting or staying on treatment because of how they expect to be treated.

It damages wellbeing

For people living with HIV, stigma affects mental health, relationships, work and everyday confidence.

Stigma affects testing, treatment and equity. Late diagnosis and untreated HIV are what cause harm – reducing stigma is how we get people tested and treated.

WHERE THIS CAME FROM

Years in the making, and built with the people it affects

A funded national priority

The campaign was funded and prioritised as Focus Area 4 of the HIV Action Plan.

Grounded in the evidence

SPOTS and the HIV Stigma Index research document the real damage that stigma and discrimination do to people living with HIV.

Led by the community

Almost a year of strategy with a sector working group, mainly people living with HIV, shaped a human-centred storytelling approach, developed with agency VML.

Verian's research then set the target: stigma is driven by a lack of understanding, and people aged over 40 are the moveable middle, where the campaign can shift the most.

What New Zealanders believed before we started

Knowledge is out of date

What people know is out of date, especially on treatment and prevention.

Confidently wrong, not unaware

Stigma is widespread

A quarter of people hold high stigma, answering one or more questions negatively. A further third hold moderate stigma.

Highest among people aged 70+

Four beliefs drive it

The most influential is misunderstanding how HIV is transmitted, and the fear of catching it.

Roots: punishment, poor outcomes

Tackling the most influential belief together with the root beliefs will be the most impactful – and these measures are the baseline the October research is judged against.

THE REALITY TODAY

HIV in 2026 looks nothing like HIV in 1986



A manageable long-term condition

With modern treatment, HIV is managed day to day much like other long-term health conditions.

People can live long, healthy lives

People on effective treatment can expect a life expectancy similar to anyone else.

Treatment stops transmission

Sustained effective treatment means HIV is not passed on to sexual partners.

WHAT DISMANTLES THE STIGMA

U = U

Undetectable = Untransmittable

People who are on treatment and have had an undetectable viral load for at least six months cannot sexually transmit HIV, as long as they stay on treatment.

In plain English

- Treatment lowers the amount of HIV in the body until tests can no longer detect it.
- That means there is zero risk of passing HIV on to a sexual partner.
- This is evidence-based science.

Once people understand this, there is far less left for the stigma to stand on.

THE BIG IDEA

“The 80s calling – they want their views back”

The campaign uses a light, familiar bit of nostalgia to make a serious point – without blaming anyone for what they believe.

It doesn't lecture. It simply says: the information you were given was right for the 80s, and it's time for an update.

Aimed especially at people whose views were shaped by earlier public messaging.



LET'S WATCH

See the campaign for yourself

The TV commercial

The main ad running across major channels

▶ youtu.be/D8v7Ah2FJys

The 30-second cut

The shorter version used online and on demand

▶ youtu.be/o2ey0xxd6Do

Opportunity to see and hear it everywhere

- **Television** Peak news, entertainment and live sport on major channels
- **YouTube and online video** Reaching people where they already watch
- **Facebook, Instagram & Shi*t You Should Care About** Short 10-second reels tackling one myth at a time
- **Google search ads** Pointing people to trusted, evidence-based information
- **Billboards and street posters** 1,491,515 chances to see on billboards nationwide, plus screens and posters in Auckland and Wellington
- **News coverage** Editorial stories in the NZ Herald and Stuff

The campaign is live April – September 2026.



THE SHORTER FILMS

Three 10-second social films, three myths, 14.6 million chances to see them

U = U

Effective treatment means HIV is not passed on to sexual partners. 4,493,007 opportunities to see.

▶ U = U 10s

A-OK

Everyday contact is safe – there is no risk from touching, kissing or sharing food. 4,792,554 opportunities to see.

▶ A-OK 10s

Today's treatment

What HIV treatment actually looks like now. 5,312,517 opportunities to see.

▶ Today's treatment 10s

3,268 click-throughs to the campaign website from these three films – part of 24,426 clicks to the site from paid media overall

Film links in the notes

People didn't just click – they stopped and read it

NZ Herald

- 4,872 readers and 5,617 page views.
- Readers spent an average of 3 minutes 41 seconds on the page – more than twice the 1 minute 24 second benchmark.
- Coverage described fear of HIV as still being stuck in the past.

Stuff

4,733 readers and 5,369 page views, with an average of 50 seconds on the page.

“78% of Kiwis hold misconceptions about HIV”

A news story carries a kind of credibility an ad cannot buy – and people gave it real time and attention.

Sh*t You Should Care About carried it to a younger crowd

1,171,668 saw it

Opportunities to see the carousel post, published by a voice this audience already trusts.

16,664 engaged

Reactions, likes, saves and comments – people actively responding rather than scrolling past.

565 passed it on

People who shared or reposted the carousel to their own followers, spreading it beyond the paid media.

Most of this audience was under 35 – the group least likely to have seen the original 1980s messaging, and the most likely to pass on today's facts.

It reached the people it set out to reach

In the news

- The NZ Herald and Stuff have both run editorial coverage, helping drive public conversation.
- That has put HIV stigma, and the facts that counter it, in front of a mainstream audience.
- That reinforces the ads rather than repeating them.

Impact to date

1,322,196 people reached, including 81% of all New Zealanders aged 40–64. 24,426 clicked through to the site from paid media, and 4,281 took an action once there.

Report link in the speaker notes

Figures as at 9 September. The real measure of success is a country that talks about HIV using today's facts, not yesterday's fears.

WHAT'S NEXT

The campaign wraps up, then we find out what shifted

Campaign ends in September

The ads finish running at the end of September, closing out roughly five months in market.

Verian research follows

Verian repeats the pre-campaign survey, so the results are measured against a real baseline – public and health workers alike.

Reporting in October

The findings are reported back in October, alongside the full reach and engagement results.

The test is not how many people saw the ads – it is whether fewer New Zealanders are still carrying 1980s beliefs about HIV.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Update what you know. Then pass it on.

- Remember U=U: effective treatment means HIV is not passed on.
- Talk about HIV the way you'd talk about any other health condition.
- Share the ads with friends and whānau.

Thank you – questions welcome