

# Dentists

## Key

- R** A **right** you have as a user of a service
- E** An **expectation** you should have as a user of a service, based on best practice and professional standards
- A** This is **advice** on how to get the most out of your services

## Does my dentist need to know about my HIV?

Dentists often ask new patients whether they have HIV. You don't need to respond to this question if you don't want to. However, there are benefits to telling your dentist. People with HIV are more likely to have particular dental problems, particularly at low CD4 counts. Your dentist may also prescribe medication such as sedatives (for people with dental phobia) which could interact badly with your HIV medication. **A**

If you do tell your dentist your HIV status, they must keep this confidential.<sup>1</sup> **R**

[1] Handbook to NHS Constitution, March 2013. <http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/NHSConstitution/Pages/Overview.aspx>

## Will my dentist treat me differently because of my HIV?

Some people living with HIV have had the experience of dentists taking extra measures to protect against HIV transmission. This includes restricting how and when patients with HIV can access services – for example, only on the last appointment of the day, to allow for extra cleaning afterwards. Others have been told they would have to pay above the usual NHS rates for dental services. But such measures are not necessary and are discriminatory.<sup>1</sup> **R** Dentists should use 'universal precautions' to prevent infection for all patients, regardless of whether they are known to have HIV.

[1] Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

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