

# HIV News - Spring 2006

There's no cure for HIV yet. But there is good news.

February 16, 2006 By Laura Whitehorn

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**Living:** Statistics show HIV combo therapy has improved and extended lives since its debut in the mid '90s. In the U.S., hospitalizations for people with HIV dropped by more than half and AIDS-related hospital deaths dropped by 32%. AIDS deaths at a London HIV clinic tumbled by half, while survival rates for people on meds in Haiti tripled.

**Caring:** Ever suspected that you were being passed off to a nurse because the doctor wasn't giving you the time of day? A recent study says that may be just fine: Nurse practitioners and physician's assistants (PAs) with HIV training provide HIV care as good as docs—better, if the doctor isn't an HIV specialist. (If you need to see the MD, speak up and schedule an appointment specifically with Doc.)

**Preventing:** Microbicides—gels that kill HIV and STDs—may be the next big thing, helping women protect themselves even when men won't use condoms. In a small trial, PRO 2000, an experimental microbicide, appeared to block HIV and herpes. For now, condoms are best—recently, they were found to block herpes in men and women (previously, they were thought to be ineffective against it). So wrap it up!

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