

DON'T GO IT ALONE. GET THE SUPPORT YOU NEED.

Ask a friend, family member, partner or spouse to help you take your medication correctly and consistently by:

- Giving you a daily call, text or email, reminding you to take your medicine
- Reviewing your medication schedule with you
- Helping you think about what may get in the way of taking your medicine
- Coming up with ideas with you for how to keep from missing a dose
- Going to healthcare appointments with you
- Going to the pharmacy with you or for you
- Assisting with organizing and managing paperwork



It's okay to ask for help. Other ways to get support include:

- Join a peer support group to connect with other people taking HIV medicine and learn from their experiences.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about any challenges you encounter. They can work with you to find solutions.
- Find someone who will listen. It helps to have someone who can listen to your experiences with HIV treatment without judgement and give you encouragement when you need it.



CONCERNED ABOUT THE COST OF YOUR MEDICATION?

There are drug assistance programs that can help you pay for your HIV medicine. Ask your pharmacist, case manager, or healthcare provider to explain these programs and help you apply.



What is PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH MEDICATION ADHERENCE?

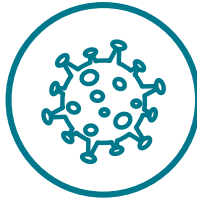
Partnership for Health-Medication Adherence (PfH-MA) is a partnership between you and your healthcare provider to better understand your health care needs. The goal of PfH-MA is to help you take your medication daily and as prescribed. Taking your medication consistently is important for HIV treatment to work by keeping the virus under control.

Talking about your life and your experiences taking HIV medicine with your healthcare provider at each appointment can help you work together on overcoming challenges to taking your HIV medicine as prescribed.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR VIRAL LOAD

Viral load is a number that represents the amount of HIV in your body. The goal is to get your viral load less than 200 copies/mL, also known as “virally suppressed,” or so low that it cannot be detected by a blood test. This is called an “undetectable viral load.”

People with HIV who have an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV to their HIV-negative sexual partners.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CD4 CELL COUNT

Your CD4 cell count measures the health of your immune system. The higher your CD4 cell count is, the better your body is able to fight diseases and infections. The goal is to keep the CD4 cell count above 200 cells/mm³ and to have CD4 cells be at least 14% of the total white blood cell count. The viral load and CD4 count are usually checked every three to six months.



WHY MUST I KEEP TAKING HIV MEDICINE?

HIV treatment does not make HIV go away, but taking your medicine daily and as prescribed slows down the virus from making copies of itself and keeps the virus from destroying immune cells in your body that fight diseases and other infections. Taking your HIV medicine consistently is important for your health.

When you miss taking your medication daily or as prescribed:

- the viral load goes up
- the virus can develop a resistance to your medications, meaning the medication will no longer work for you
- the immune system becomes weaker as CD4 count goes down

Taking your medication consistently keeps the right amount of medicine in your body to control the virus.

WHAT ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS?

It can be easy to skip a dose when your medicine makes you feel bad. Call your medical provider if you experience side effects. They can recommend ways to manage side effects or find another medication that doesn't cause those side effects.

Please don't stop taking your medicine!

ADHERENCE STEPS THAT WORK

Which methods do you use or plan to use?

- Pair taking your medication with an activity that you do every day, like brushing your teeth or eating a meal.
- Use the medication schedule to keep track of when to take your medicine each day.
- Download a medication scheduling app on a mobile device to set daily reminders.
- Use a pill organizer to keep track of daily medicines.

