

Living Well With HIV: Your Medicine Guide

Medical-Surgical · Immune & Infectious Disease

HIV is a virus that weakens your immune system. HIV medicines keep the virus under control, so you stay healthy and protect others.

Take your medicine every day

- Take it at the same time each day. Set a phone alarm.
- **Never stop or skip doses, even when you feel well.** Missed doses help the virus resist your medicine.
- If you miss a dose, follow your pharmacist's advice. Never take 2 doses at once.
- Refill before you run out.

Know your numbers

- Viral load: how much virus is in your blood. The goal is undetectable.
- CD4 count: how strong your immune system is.
- Keep every blood test. Next test: _____.

Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)

- If your viral load stays undetectable, you do not pass HIV to partners through sex.
- Use condoms to prevent other infections passed through sex.
- **Never share needles.** Do not share razors or toothbrushes.

Check before other medicines

- Tell every provider, dentist, and pharmacist that you take HIV medicine.

- Do not take St. John's wort.
- Ask when to take antacids (Tums, Maalox), iron, or calcium. They need to be taken hours apart from some HIV medicines.

Stay protected

- Get the vaccines your provider advises, including a yearly flu shot.
- Wash your hands often.

Call your provider today if you have

- A new rash
- Yellow skin or eyes, or dark urine
- A new fever, night sweats, or a cough that will not go away
- Missed doses, or you are running out of medicine

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- A rash with blisters, peeling skin, or mouth sores
- Swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat
- Severe trouble breathing or chest pain
- A severe headache with a stiff neck, confusion, or a seizure

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/hiv-medicines-living-well/patient

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