



How to Cope with a Positive HIV Diagnosis

Learning that you have HIV may bring many feelings. You may feel scared, worried, angry, sad, or confused. These feelings are normal. You do not have to go through this alone. Your healthcare provider can answer your questions and help you get the care and support you need. If you notice changes in how you sleep, eat, or feel, talk with your healthcare provider. Help is available for stress, anxiety, and depression. Talk with trusted healthcare professionals and use reliable sources to learn about HIV. Support groups, family, friends, and people you trust can also help. Today, people with HIV who take their medicine and stay in care can live long, healthy lives. What Are HIV and AIDS? HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV attacks the body's immune system, which helps fight illness. Having HIV does not mean you have AIDS. With treatment, many people with HIV never develop AIDS. AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection. Starting HIV treatment early helps protect your immune system and can prevent HIV from becoming AIDS. When Can HIV Become AIDS? HIV can become AIDS if it is not treated. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection. It happens when HIV has badly damaged the immune system. Today, HIV treatment has changed how HIV is managed. Most people who start treatment early and take their HIV medicine every day do not develop AIDS. Taking your HIV medicine as prescribed helps protect your immune system and keeps you healthy.

HIV Treatment

HIV treatment is recommended for everyone with HIV.

Starting treatment as soon as possible helps protect your immune system and helps you stay healthy.

Taking your HIV medicine every day helps lower the amount of HIV in your body. People who have an undetectable viral load cannot sexually transmit HIV. This is called Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U).

Although there is no cure for HIV, treatment helps people live long, healthy lives. Your healthcare provider can help you choose the treatment that is right for you.

Protecting Your Immune System

If HIV is not treated and the immune system becomes very weak, a person may be at higher risk for infections such as:

Tuberculosis (TB)

Pneumocystis pneumonia (PCP)

Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

Toxoplasmosis (Toxo)

Cryptosporidiosis (Crypto)

Mycobacterium avium complex (MAC)

Taking your HIV medicine every day helps protect your immune system and lowers your risk of these infections.

Living Well with HIV

People with HIV can work, go to school, have relationships, and enjoy full lives.

Staying in care, taking your HIV medicine, and asking questions about your health can help you stay healthy and reach your goals.

Remember, you are more than your HIV diagnosis. Your healthcare team is here to support you.

Take Charge of Your Health

You can stay healthy by:

- Taking your HIV medicine every day as prescribed.
- Keeping your healthcare appointments.
- Asking your healthcare provider about your viral load and CD4 count.
- Eating healthy foods.
- Being physically active.
- Getting enough sleep.
- Taking care of your mental health.
- Talking openly with your healthcare provider.
- Avoiding sharing needles or injection equipment.
- Asking for help when you need it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your Registered Nurse Care Manager, or call PHC California Nurse Advice Line at (800) 797-1717.