Combo Vision

How well do you know your meds? These three HIVers can even visualize their regimens.

September 1, 2005

Rose Todd-Stanford,
46, Cincinnati
Diagnosed 1993

Combo: Reyataz with a Norvir booster, Viread, AZT
How do you like it? I'm good with AZT, Viread and Reyataz. In a previous combo, I used to take Norvir at full dose and I had problems. But I've forgiven it and made friends with it at the lower dose. It does still seem to cause me some lipo—my breast size has gone up.
How do you picture your pills? Reyataz is an opening flower. Norvir—I see sickness. For Viread, I see a book—only because the name includes "read." For AZT, I see a rainbow.
Words of wisdom: If a drug's side effects are more uncomfortable than HIV, then I don't want to take that med. I'd rather have five good years than 20 years with diarrhea and lipo.

Dyane Haddock,
41, New port Richey, Florida
Diagnosed 1994

Combo: Viramune, Emtriva, Ziagen
How do you like it? I have no issues with Viramune or Emtriva, but Ziagen seems to give me intestinal problems.
How do you picture your pills? Viramune can make me tired, so I imagine my big, soft bed, with lots of pillows. Emtriva is a happily blank picture. For Ziagen, I see a bloated stomach.
Words of wisdom: Despite the side effects, my doctor and I are happy with this combo because my CD4s stay above 500. I guess the best combo would be none at all.

Ronald H. Jackson,
54, Greensboro, North Carolina
Diagnosed 1992

Combo: Viread, Ziagen, Sustiva
How do you like it? I guess I like it. It's a once-a-day combo, with or without food, with no side effects.

How do you picture your pills? I just see the colors: Viread, blue; Ziagen and Sustiva, orange. They’re meds for a chronic health problem—nothing more.
Words of wisdom: Taking meds is a necessary evil. As long as they do the job, I’ll keep taking them. What more is there to say?

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