



Communicating With Your Health Providers

Building relationships with your care team members is key.

April 3, 2023 By POZ Staff

Whether you've been living long term with HIV or only recently tested positive for the virus, virtually all your treatment options today are highly effective and largely free of side effects. In addition to once-daily all-in-one pills, new long-acting injectables are now available.

Choosing the right treatment for you is only the start of maintaining your overall health. Just like keeping your HIV in check, maintaining your physical and mental health requires a team of providers. Communicating with all your care team members is essential to staying well.

Start with your primary care provider (PCP), who may or may not be a physician. Increasingly, in many situations, a nurse practitioner may serve as your PCP. Regardless of their medical background, you'll benefit greatly by beginning to build trust with your PCP.

Although it would be nice if your PCP began the process of building trust, often it's up to you to ensure it happens. Being honest with your PCP about your medical needs will go a long way. Are you having trouble adhering to your treatment? Are you having side effects? Say so.

Hopefully, you can build enough trust with your PCP to develop a partnership in which you feel comfortable asking them anything. If they don't immediately have answers, you should expect them to take responsibility for getting you answers.

Next, start broadening the circle of trust with your other care team members. Although they may each have a limited role in your care, giving them all the relevant facts will help them give you what you need.

For many reasons, developing trust with your PCP or other members of your care team may not be possible. Before deciding that it's not working out, talk with them about it. Share your concerns, respectfully but honestly. You may be surprised by how things improve.

If after trying to make the situation better, you still feel like you need to find a new PCP or replace another care team member, be sure to find a new provider before you stop seeing your former one. Staying in care is crucial to maintaining your overall health.

Writing down a list of questions to share with your providers before you see them is a great way to keep everyone focused during your visits. Both you and your provider will benefit from making the most use of your limited time together. Your health care is a partnership.

Go to [HIV.gov](https://www.hiv.gov) or the [POZ Health Services Directory](https://www.poz.org/health-services-directory) for help building your care team.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/communicating-health-providers>