



Have a Conversation With Your Doctor

How to make sure you get the best care.

February 24, 2025 By Mathew Rodriguez

The foundation of any successful experience with any treatment regimen, but especially with long-acting injectables, is an open and honest relationship with your primary care provider. While it's true that, for many things, you should follow "doctor's orders," that's not always the case — you have much more power in this crucial relationship than you think. As with medication, when it comes to physicians, there is such a thing as patient choice, and here are some tips on how to talk to your doctor to make sure you're getting the best care.

1. How often do they stay up to date with new literature?

The field of medicine is constantly growing and changing — and often at very quick speed. New drugs are getting approved and studies of drugs already on the market are constantly being published. One way to know if a doctor is right for you or not might be to ask them how often they are staying up to date with the newest medical literature, which journals they read, and how their reading affects their work as a caregiver.

2. Do they attend conferences?

Continuing education is a cornerstone of being a medical professional, and while some doctors work on a care team, going to conferences and learning about the newest advances and techniques in care is the best way to make sure that they are giving you the care you deserve. Just as with asking about medical literature, you might want to ask your doctor how often they seek out professional conferences for their own skill building and knowledge.

3. What's their communication philosophy?

Just as with talking to any person, every doctor has a different communication style. Some might start your session asking you a lot of questions, some might start with just asking you what brought you into their office today. When it comes to discussing potential medications, do they give you what you think is best, or do they start with a conversation? Knowing this ahead of time will definitely save you some time and energy. Just as you might want a partner who shares a communication style, or at least will tell you what they prefer, you can make sure yours matches your physicians.

4. How do they navigate disagreements with their patients?

Most people don't think that disagreement and conflict have any place in a doctor-patient relationship, but that's not true. While doctor's recommendations should often be heeded, there should also be ample room for disagreement and discussion. What's worth knowing, whether you're seeking to start long-acting injectables or switch your HIV medications — you can check out POZ's [HIV Drug Chart](#) for a complete list of current regimens — you might end up in a disagreement with your doctor. It might be best to know, in advance, how doctors navigate differences of opinion between themselves and their patients.