



Don't Feel Constricted to Your Current HIV Regimen

Ask yourself some important questions.

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The key to a successful HIV regimen is finding the right fit for you and your lifestyle. In the new era of HIV treatment, several options are available to you. These include pills and injections—both of which are represented on POZ's [HIV Drug Chart](#).

Whether you're new to treatment or are looking to switch from your current regiment, choosing a treatment is a process that begins with asking yourself some important questions, especially if you're considering switching from a pill-based regimen to long-acting injectables.

1. Can I adhere to the medication I'm on right now? The first step in finding a successful HIV treatment is asking yourself, honestly, whether adherence to your current regimen is easy or a struggle. And there's no shame in admitting if it is hard. Pill fatigue, pill burden and nonadherence are all real, documented phenomena and can happen to anyone on HIV treatment. Not being able to take a pill is not a personal failing—it's just a challenge you need to address.
2. Can I make more appointments, and do I want more? If you're thinking about long-acting injectables, being able to make once-a-month or once-every-other-month appointments is essential for success. Thinking about the benefits and drawbacks of visiting your doctor can often help you decide what step you want to take next on your HIV treatment journey. An added benefit of more clinic time is more face time with your care team.
3. Does my pill make me think about my HIV? George Froehle, PA-C, the chief HIV clinician at Minneapolis's Aliveness Project, says some people don't realize that taking a daily HIV treatment pill can take a psychological toll. Froehle says, "It's a subconscious daily reminder that they have HIV. I hear it over and over again." He says some of his patients have experienced a kind of freedom from that mindset by switching over to injections.
4. Do I want to take one or more fewer pills per day? Your relationship to your own pill regimen is unique. Many people with HIV take multiple pills a day for other conditions they have. Froehle says every person is different. For some people already taking several pills a day, taking another one for HIV doesn't make a difference. But, for others, even just one more pill can be burdensome. "I'm surprised by the number of people who say, yes, even taking one less pill a day would be really helpful," he says.
5. Do I at least want to try it? For some people, options are a good thing; for others, the experience is what matters. Froehle encourages patients who are curious about long-acting injectable HIV treatment to try it for a while; if they don't like it, they can always go back to taking daily pills.

