



HIV Treatment Is a Conversation

Think more actively about your health with your care team.

April 1, 2025 By Mathew Rodriguez

Dealing with doctors, insurance or the medical world in general can sometimes feel one-sided. It can feel like everything is being told to you: Medications are prescribed without a robust discussion of the ins and outs, and your job is just to swallow a pill or take a shot and get your numbers to a better place. But that's not how it has to be. All decisions about your health, including what type of treatment you want to be on, should be a conversation.

"I'm a really firm believer in shared decision-making," says George Froehle, PA-C, the lead HIV clinician at Minneapolis's Aliveness Project.

To that end, Froehle says he always talks to his patients about long-acting injectables as long as they meet the minimum requirements. (For Froehle, that simply means the person doesn't have an active resistance to any of the drugs in the injection or a chronic hepatitis B infection, as they would have to switch to a once-daily medication to treat it.) The idea, Froehle says, is to get people talking about their treatment options and have them start pondering whether they are happy with their current regimen and want to switch. These are questions that people may not think about but, in his mind, it is a physician's job to get people thinking more actively about their health.

"I like to present all the options to patients and have them choose versus me just directing them on what to take," he says. "It's a shared decision. We've both chosen this versus me dictating 'This is what it's going to be.'"

Froehle says giving people options is often a recipe for success. In that sense, when he presents people with the option of taking long-acting injectables, he is not doing so because he hopes they will switch. He is doing it because as a clinician, he believes people should make informed decisions.

"They don't need to do it," he says. "It's about keeping the option open to people." But, Froehle says, a chat about treatment with your health care provider isn't the final conversation you should be having. You should also be having a heart-to-heart with yourself about how your current regimen fits into your life and whether you see a need to change that.

"A person should ask themselves whether they can commit to coming in every month or two

months, if they can make follow-up appointments and whether it's realistic with their life," he says.

Whatever regimen you choose, know that it's not one that should be dictated to you—it's a decision you arrive at after having a frank dialogue with your care provider or peers on the [POZ Forums](#) as well as with yourself.

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