



Tips for Picking Your HIV Treatment

Do your research and find a support system.

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1. Make sure you have the right health care provider. Living well with HIV starts with having a good relationship with the person who gives you your HIV care. If you can't be completely honest with your doctor, then it might be time to find a new one. Of course, it's not feasible for many people to find a new doctor, but it's important that you view this relationship as a lifelong collaboration. Gauge how you feel about your doctor: Do they have a good bedside manner? Do they use language that makes you feel comfortable and affirmed? Your comfort should be paramount.
2. Do your research. While your doctor is a great source of information about all the treatment options available to you, there are plenty of other reliable resources you can turn to deepen your research on your own time. Not only does POZ.com have an entire section dedicated to [starting HIV treatment](#), POZ also has a [handy drug chart](#) that includes information about potential side effects, dosing and more. Having this knowledge when you walk into your care provider's office will make any conversations about treatment more robust and can help you settle on the best treatment for you.
3. Know your body and your lifestyle. Just as important as knowing the details about potential treatment options—including side effects—is understanding your body and your lifestyle. Share with your doctor any information that might be relevant before they write you a prescription. Are you a morning person who would prefer to take your pill with the sunrise? Do you want to take your medication with or without food? Are there any other health issues your doctor should know about? Are you thinking about [long-acting injectables](#) because you hate taking pills? All of these are relevant; it's not just medical necessity that's at play when it comes to treatment! Personal preference also plays a huge role.
4. Check in if your treatment isn't working for you. Don't think of a prescription as the end of a conversation—it's just the beginning! Are you tolerating your meds? Is something off? Are you having side effects that you didn't anticipate? Measuring the success of a treatment goes beyond whether the medication gets you to an undetectable viral load. Make sure to check in with your doctor about how your medication makes you feel so that you can adjust it accordingly.
5. Find a support system. Your doctor is just one star in a constellation of people who can help you live with HIV. Other professionals, including a psychologist, can help you on this journey. And, while you're rounding up help, your support system can include friends and some people you may not even know yet! Consider [POZ Forums](#) if you're looking to discuss topics related to HIV with others, or check in with loved ones who can lend you an ear.

