



Treatment: Twice-Yearly

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March 27, 2023 By [Liz Highleyman](#)

Sunlenca (lenacapavir), a long-acting medication recently approved for treatment-experienced people with multidrug-resistant HIV, also works well for people starting antiretroviral therapy for the first time. Sunlenca, from Gilead Sciences, is the first approved HIV capsid inhibitor. It remains active against HIV that has developed resistance to other drugs, and its long half-life allows it to be administered once every six months. The Phase II CALIBRATE trial enrolled 183 previously untreated participants. They were randomly allocated to four groups, receiving daily Sunlenca pills or twice-yearly injections in combination with other antiretrovirals or else a standard oral regimen. At 54 weeks, 85% to 90% of those who took Sunlenca plus tenofovir alafenamide or bictegravir had an undetectable viral load. Treatment was generally well tolerated. The most common side effect was mild to moderate injection site reactions. This new long-acting injectable is a welcome option, but it still needs an equally durable partner to construct a complete twice-yearly regimen.

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