Holiday!

January 25, 2011 By Aundaray Guess

Who doesn't love a holiday. The word itself makes you conjures images of relaxing on a beach or a day off of work lounging at home with a good book or a remote control in hand. Depending on the day itself it can be a day of remembrance or a gathering of friends and family. And to show my age the word Holiday is considered one of Madonna's early hits.

But for me holiday had a different meaning, one that affected my life and not in a good way. For those not up on the lingo, the term holiday as it refers to HIV, is when you give yourself a break from taking your medication. It might just be one dosage, it might be a couple of days or even a few months. But there's no such thing as a free holiday and you ultimately pay a price.
I learned this two years ago when I took my medication only when the mood hit me.

Being positive for 24 years, you just hit that point where you are tired of swallowing pills that may get stuck in your throat or going through the act itself of dispensing each one out of their bottles into your hands. My pharmacist who's a good guy tries to push the pill box on me. The box where you just place them in each dated spot. For me those boxes represent something that seniors use in nursing homes. I didn't want to be associated with that.

I started to come up with excuse of why I wasn't going to take my pills for a particular day, "I'm undetectable so I can miss tonight's dosage" "I'll take extra in the morning" "I've worked hard all day and don't have the energy""I'm going to give my body a cleansing"

I'm sure there's more as I had every excuse in the book. But the excuses didn't mean beans when I was told by my doctor that my body had become resistant to all HIV medication.
Good news I didn't have to worry about taking any meds, because it would be a waste of time. Bad news, by me starting and stopping my medication I allowed the HIV virus to strengthen up the their army and beat down my wall of resistance.

Initially there was some joy knowing I wouldn't have to take anymore pills but when I was told that my t-cells had dropped from the six hundred range to 54 I was scared. And there was no second chance of taking my restarting my old regiment of meds. I was now on an extended holiday and each day I was at-risk of catching an illness that my body wouldn't be able to fend off. Damn those holiday.

A nurse once told me a long time ago when I was complaining about the size of my pills, "If it's saving your life stop bitching". Her words came back, ringing in my ear. Eventually there was a study of several new drugs and after swimming in the waters of uncertainty a life preserver was thrown to me. I was given a second chance.

Since then I unpacked my bags and got back to work. Of course like everything in life there's a lesson.

When it comes to taking your meds, don’t half do it. Either stop completely or take them completely. And again as the nurse said, if it’s going to save your life….

People who practice unsafe sex and think taking a pill is a walk in the park let me tell you it’s no holiday. Shoulda, coulda, woulda-when it comes to your life you should think twice about the holidays as you’ll be be here to enjoy the real calender holidays. The virus is already attacking you, don’t help it but hurt its chances and reclaim your life!

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