How I Never Miss A Dose

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If you're HIV positive, then I'm sure you've experienced the same bit of panic I've had when I realize, half a day later, I've forgotten to take my HIV meds. The panic comes from knowing that if you miss enough doses, you could eventually develop resistance to one or more of the meds, including cross-resistance to an entire class of anti-HIV drugs.

I've finally got a system in place for my twice-a-day regimen that's cut way down on these panicky moments. I'm only missing about two doses a year now. Even though that makes the title of this post a bit of an exaggeration, it's still something to crow about.

So here's my system. The key for me is using two types of reminders. When I used to rely on just one type of reminder, like the watch alarm I had years ago, sometimes I'd miss it. Or worse, I'd hear it, but would be busy with something, and quickly forget that the alarm went off. So even though I've upgraded from a watch alarm to using my iPhone's alarm function, I also get reminders via email using a free service from Intelecare, a company that "focuses on increasing medical adherence."

I heard about their reminder service a couple of years ago when I worked at AIDSmeds.com. They seem to make their money by selling services to other healthcare companies and websites, which allows them to offer free services to consumers. You just create an account online, tell them how you want your reminders delivered (email, text, voicemail, or push notification to their iPhone app), and that's it. You can even have them sent multiple ways at the same time.

So now when I've missed or forgotten about my iPhone alarm, I still have a new email sitting in my inbox as a back-up reminder. I've made it a practice not to delete these emails until I actual swallow my pills.

And that's how I (almost) never miss a dose.

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