

In a Nutshell

August 4, 2006 By [Shawn Decker](#)

I was explaining my treatment history to a friend the other day, and I thought it would be a good idea to post it here. By and large, I've had great success with HIV meds, which is why my current strategy is confusing to some.



IN A NUTSHELL:

1999: started HIV drugs full-time.

2000: After 10 months, I went off my meds. After a few weeks, my t-cells dropped a little and I got spooked. Started a new combo of meds.

2003: Feeling like an emotionless drone, I went on my meds one week on, one week off. The viral load remained undetectable and my t-cell count actually went up.

2005: From February to April I was off my meds entirely, getting lab work every 3-4 weeks to keep tabs. (I went off to clear my head so I could finish writing my book.)

After one month, my viral load was still undetectable but my t-cells went from 450 to 350. I wasn't spooked. The day of my next appointment I went to the ER (platelets dropped, viral load had gone through the roof, 600,000, t-cells were 75 or so). Spent two nights in the hospital.

April 2005-last Sunday night: On meds full-time.

And my last blog entry sucked. My side effects day-to-day aren't that bad, not as tangible as the 10 months of diarrhea on viracept or the sustained mental fog of sustiva. In 2003 the decision was based on side effects, so I have my side effects story down pretty good.

This time it has more to do with long range worries. If my medication can do it's job with half the dosage, that spares my body the expense of being on these drugs, which everyone acknowledges are pretty harsh.

There. That's my story. In a nutshell.

Shawn
