

**LET'S TALK** about



# Keeping All

YOUR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

# ***Your health depends on regular, ongoing care***

HIV infection lasts a lifetime. So controlling HIV means making a lifetime commitment to your health.

That means taking your HIV medicines every day, practicing safe sex, and having regular checkups with your medical provider.

**And this has been proven to work.**



In fact, large studies of Americans with HIV infection show that those who are seen by medical providers on a regular basis live longer than those who don't.



Compared with those who miss their appointments, people living with HIV who are in regular care have:

- *Better success with their HIV medicines*
- *Fewer hospitalizations*
- *Longer lives*





## *What regular, ongoing care does for you*

**When you first start HIV treatment,** you will want to make sure that the medicines are working to reduce your HIV infection. Your medical provider will arrange for a blood test to check your viral load and CD4 cell count. If your viral load has gone down and your CD4 cell count has gone up, you will know that the medicines are working.

Your medical provider can also help you with any issues you may be having, such as side effects or remembering to take your medicines. He or she may also refer you to other medical providers for help if you have other health concerns.

**When your virus is more under control,** your medical provider will work with you to keep it controlled. Having a trusted professional in your

corner to advise you whenever questions or issues arise will help you stay strong, both mentally and physically.

**Regular, ongoing care includes:**

- Blood tests to check your viral load and CD4 cell count
- Physical exams to check your overall health
- Prescriptions for HIV medicines (or changes to prescriptions when needed)
- Discussions with your medical provider that keep you healthy

## *The HIV treatment team includes YOU*

You and your HIV medical providers form an important team—one that keeps you healthy by keeping your HIV under control.

Your role on this team is very important. You need to be sure to come to all of your scheduled medical appointments. You also need to answer questions openly and honestly so that your medical providers can do their part. And you get to ask all the questions you want to ask.

Remember, there are **no** wrong questions: everything important to you is going to be important to your medical provider.



## *Let's be honest...*

When your medical provider asks:

*“Is it hard for you to come to all of your medical appointments?”*

he or she is **not** trying to judge you.

Instead, your provider wants to help you stay healthy. By answering honestly, you and your provider can work together to make a good plan for you.

***Being truthful  
benefits your health***



## *Tips to help you stick with regular, ongoing care*

(Check off the ones that sound good to you)

### **Remember your appointments...**

- Use a calendar to mark off appointment days.
- If you use the internet, download one of the free apps for computers and smart phones that can help remind you about your medical appointments.  
**SEARCH FOR** “calendar reminder app.”
- Set up a reminder alarm on your phone.
- Keep your appointment card on a mirror, on your refrigerator, or anywhere else you will see it often.
- Ask a family member or friend to help you remember.





## Remember your questions...

- Use this booklet (or a notebook) to write down questions as you think of them. Feel free to ask all the questions on your list at your next appointment.

## Remember to keep in touch...

- Make sure your medical providers have your correct contact information (telephone number, address, e-mail) and let them know if any contact information changes.
- If something comes up and you can't keep a scheduled appointment, contact the clinic to let them know, and make a new appointment as soon as possible.

**Remember: Getting into regular, ongoing care will help you live a strong and healthy life with HIV.**

## *My Questions*

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## Resources

### For general information on regular, ongoing care:

Contact CDC-INFO online at <http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/> or call 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) (TTY: 888-232-6348) Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm ET

**Your call is free and private.**

### To find specific services in your area:

Go to: <http://locator.aids.gov/>

You can find everything from test centers to housing assistance in your area by simply entering your zip code.

### For help with paying for medical appointments:

For **Medicaid**, check your State Health Department.

To find a nearby **Ryan White Program**, go to

[http://findhivcare.hrsa.gov/Search\\_HAB.aspx](http://findhivcare.hrsa.gov/Search_HAB.aspx), use the AIDS locator above, or call (877) 464-4772, Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays), 9 am to 5:30 pm ET.

### To connect with other persons living with HIV

Visit our new website, complete with information designed to keep you healthy and safe for as long as you live. Available at (URL TK).

You can also find lots more information about HIV at

[www.cdc.gov/actagainstaids](http://www.cdc.gov/actagainstaids)

**ACT**  
against  
**AIDS**

PREVENTION  
IS CARE  
*Protect Yourself. Protect Others.*