

Why HIV Medication Saves Lives



5

Reasons

Judith, living with HIV since 1997

Adherence means taking your HIV medicine exactly as your doctor prescribes – every dose, every day. Adherence is important to the success of your HIV treatment.

1

It Helps You Live Longer.

People who start treatment earlier, when they have higher CD4 cell counts, may live as long as people without HIV infection. Without treatment, HIV leads to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) and may lead to early death.

2

It Helps Your Medicine Work.

HIV treatment does not make HIV go away, but taking your medicine as directed slows down the virus by making it hard for the virus to make copies of itself.

3

It Keeps You Healthy.

Taking every dose, every day, keeps the virus from destroying too many CD4 cells, which play an important role in how your body fights off infections and other illnesses. That means you stay healthy!

4

It Helps Prevent Drug Resistance to HIV Medicine.

Missing doses and not taking your medicine correctly makes it easier for HIV in your body to change and cause your medicines to stop working. This is called drug resistance. Taking every dose on time every day helps to prevent drug resistance.

5

It Can Help Protect Your Partners.

Taking your medicine exactly as your doctor prescribes helps protect your sexual partners from becoming infected. When you take your HIV medication every day, you have a much lower chance of passing the virus to your sexual partners. But remember, you can still pass HIV to others, so you should take steps to prevent transmission by using condoms every time you have sex.

Talk to your provider about the importance of taking your HIV medication every day.

For more information go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/living/index.html>

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention

