Keeping HIV Under Control

Your Health, Cared For.

Getting Started

What is medication adherence?

Taking a medicine as prescribed is called "adherence to treatment." Always taking a medicine the right way is very important for the medicine to work.

Why is medication adherence so important?

We know that if you take your HIV medication regularly you can live well with HIV for many years. Taking these medications can also decrease complications and decrease your risk of passing HIV to others.

Good adherence to an HIV treatment regimen helps prevent drug resistance. When a drug is no longer able to fight HIV effectively, HIV has become "resistant" to that drug. If you develop resistance, you will likely have to change some of the drugs in your regimen.

If your viral load goes up while you are still taking your HIV drug regimen, your doctor should offer you a resistance test to find out which drugs are not working and to help choose ones that will. For some people with resistance to many HIV drugs, it may be difficult to find a new combination.

The best way for you to keep your medicines working to control HIV is to take them as directed – every dose, every day.

Take an active role in your health

- Always talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about any questions or concerns you may have about your health or your HIV medicine.

Our Services

Codman Square Health Center is a center of excellence in HIV care for the Dorchester community. Our HIV program offers comprehensive HIV services, including HIV routine testing, HIV social services case management and HIV clinical care. Our HIV team is diverse and multicultural, and able to provide services in Haitian Creole, French and Spanish.

Hours:

Mon-Tues: 8am-9pm
Weds: 8am-6:30pm
Thurs: 8am-9pm
Friday: 12pm-5pm
Saturday: 9am-1pm
Sunday: Closed

Contact us:
Phone: (617)474-1444
- Be sure to see your doctor regularly. Keep him/her informed of any side effects you may be experiencing.
- Educate yourself about the medications you are taking, and be sure you understand the way they work.
- Do not change or stop treatment without first speaking with your doctor.
- Become involved in watching your viral load and keeping track of your other test results.
- Talk to your doctor about any personal issues that may make it hard for you to take your medications regularly (depression or alcohol or drug abuse).
- Notify your case manager about any insurance issues you may have (private or HDAP), or issues getting medications from the pharmacy.

Ways to Maintain Adherence
Everyone forgets to take their medicines sometimes. Here are some ideas to help you remember to take your medications on time.

- Use timers or a watch with an alarm to help you take your medications at the same time every day.
- Use a pillbox that has separate compartments for each time of day that you have to take your pills. Fill the box ahead of time, at the same time each day or week.
- Keep a supply of pills close to where you will be when you need to take them: in the bathroom, in the kitchen, or in your car. Just be sure that they are out of the reach of children and are stored according to each drug’s storage guidelines.
- Take your pills while watching a favorite TV show, fixing a meal, or when leaving for work.
- If you’re going away, be sure to pack enough medications to last the entire trip.
- Plan ahead for refills so you do not run out of any medications. You can also register with Codman Pharmacy to have your medication delivered safely to your home on time.

Things to think about before you start treatment:
Before you get started, it is important to be prepared and commit to taking your HIV drugs the right way, every day for your own health.

- How other medications interact with your drugs.
- Possible side effects.
- Your schedule at home, work, and/or school.
- Any personal issues (depression or alcohol or drug abuse).
- Not having disclosed your HIV status to work colleagues, friends, lovers, or family.
- Lack of health insurance (Ask us how we can help!).

If needed, your healthcare team can give you accurate information to answer your questions and may recommend resources to help you address these issues.

Remember the Big Picture:
- It is so important to follow the medication plan you and your doctor have agreed upon.
- By taking the correct dose of your medicine at the correct time every day, you can help keep HIV under control by keeping your viral load down.