

HIV TREATMENT

SIMPLE FACT SHEET TO HELP DISPEL MYTHS AND ELIMINATE STIGMA

While there is no cure for HIV, there are medications available to help manage the virus and maintain health.

HIV treatment taken consistently can help repress the amount of virus making copies in the immune system. A person that achieves HIV suppression is also known as "undetectable".

Inconsistent HIV treatment can cause the body to reject or build a resistance to the medications taken, weakening the CD4 cells that keep the body healthy. Building a resistance is damaging as it limits the types of medications that can be taken and increasing risk of developing AIDS.

If at any time there are problems with taking treatment as instructed, or side effects are experienced, it is recommended to seek a provider to help find the best step to take. When treatment first begins, a patient may experience headaches, fatigue, upset stomach and other aches or pains and this is called an adjustment period that usually lasts from a week to a month. The benefits of treatment after this period far outweigh the beginning adjustment, so be patient and be in communication with your provider.

PREGNANT AND HIV POSITIVE?

Many have concerns of women being HIV positive and taking their treatment and with the progress made today, it is recommended so that women living with HIV that want to have children can reduce the risk of passing the virus on to their baby. (CDC states the risk is reduced to less than 1% transmission rate in supervised and ongoing care)

One of the most important things in being on any lifetime medical treatment is to build a support system of trusted friends and family that are aware of your status, willing to go to appointments with you and discuss your concerns. It is not required to go through this diagnosis alone.

For more information in HIV treatment tips, please visit AIDS.gov for newly diagnosed, women, children and older adults managing HIV.