Treating HIV

People with HIV can live long, full lives thanks to effective treatments



Treatment for HIV is called antiretroviral therapy (ART).

- ART involves taking a combination of HIV medicines on a regular schedule, called a treatment regimen.
- ART doesn't cure HIV, but it helps people live long, healthy lives with the virus.
- A main goal of ART is to reduce the amount of HIV in the body to an undetectable viral load.
  - * People who maintain an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus through sex.

U = U
Undetectable = Untransmittable

HIV drug classes

There are different classes of ART, grouped according to how they affect HIV in the body.

These classes are:

- Nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs)
- Non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs)
- Protease inhibitors (PIs)
- Fusion inhibitors
- CCR5 antagonists
- Attachment inhibitors
- Post-attachment inhibitors
- Integrase strand transfer inhibitors (INSTIs)
- Capsid inhibitors



Forms of HIV drugs

People with HIV generally take two or three HIV medicines from at least two different drug classes for their treatment regimen.

Some medicines are taken once a day, while others are long-acting and taken less often.

These medicines come in different forms, including:

- Single-tablet regimens, which are multiple medicines from different classes combined into 1 pill or tablet
- Multiple-tablet regimens, which are multiple HIV medicines taken as 2 or more pills or tablets
- Two or more medicines combined into 1 tablet
- Oral suspensions, which are 1 or more medicines in liquid form
- Injectables, which are 1 or more medicines that are injected



There are more than 50 FDA-approved HIV medicines to treat infection

Choosing a treatment regimen

When deciding on a treatment plan, you and your clinician will consider factors like:

- Other health conditions
- Possible side effects of HIV drugs
- Possible interactions between HIV drugs and other medicines you take
- Whether the treatment regimen is convenient for you
- Any issues (like lack of health insurance) that could keep you from sticking to your treatment plan



Together, you and your clinician can come up with the best treatment regimen for your health and lifestyle.

When does HIV treatment start working?

The sooner you start ART after an HIV diagnosis, the sooner it can start working. Talk to your clinician about starting ART right away.

Once treatment is started, the viral load of a person with HIV usually becomes undetectable in 3–6 months.



Need HIV treatment but not sure how to get it?

The **Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program** offers support for people who need help finding and paying for care.

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healthywomen