

## ■ Pros and Cons of Disclosure

Pros	Cons

# ■ Tips for Telling Your Partner You Are HIV Positive

## Before You Tell

Here are some things to think about before telling someone you have HIV:

- Will they keep the news to themselves? Don't tell if you think they'll tell others without your permission.
- Will you get beat up or worse? Don't put yourself in any danger.

## When To Tell Someone You Have HIV

Knowing when to tell can be hard. Here are some things to think about:

- Why do you want the person to know?
- Are you prepared for all the possible responses they could have?
- Are you prepared to have the person reject you?
- Are you prepared to have the person feel much closer to you?
- Are you prepared for all the emotions this talk might bring up?
- Be prepared to give the person a lot of support. This might seem strange since you're the one with HIV. You've known for a while, though. They're just finding out.

## How To Tell Someone You Have HIV

- When you tell someone you have HIV, they'll usually take their cues from you. If you're calm about dealing with HIV, they will be calm. If you're not ashamed of having HIV, they won't think it's anything to be ashamed of. It's important to "be in the right space" beforehand. You have a lot of control over the outcome.
- Decide where and when you want to tell your partner. Take your time with sharing the information. Find a private spot that will put you at ease and at the same time is non-threatening to him or her. Make sure the time is right for you. If you don't feel well, try to reschedule. A time and place that is not linked to sexual activity is best. Make sure the time is right. Don't rush into it and don't rush through it.
- Decide how you want to share your status. If you are going to tell your partner in person, let him or her know beforehand that you have something very important to discuss. Writing a letter or talking on the phone can be an effective alternative. Try to follow up with a phone call or a visit to find out how he or she is reacting. If you write and don't follow up, he or she may feel cut off. Give the person a chance to respond.

- Practice in advance. Decide what you want to say and the messages you want your partner to hear. Rehearse with a friend what you will say.
- Be honest and direct. Beating around the bush doesn't make it easier.
- Ask how the other person is feeling. Knowing what emotions you are dealing with can help you cope.
- End with a discussion of the next step. This helps move the conversation along and give you a graceful exit if necessary.

You are not responsible for how they respond. No matter how they react, they'll probably need time to think.

# ■ What Are the Pros and Cons of My Substance Use?

Substance: \_\_\_\_\_

How often do I use? \_\_\_\_\_

Each time I use, How much do I use? \_\_\_\_\_

How do I use it? \_\_\_\_\_

Who do I use with? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do I usually use? \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Pros</b> <b>What I like about this substance.</b>	<b>Cons</b> <b>My concerns and dislikes about this substance.</b>	<b>Feeling</b> <b>Thermometer</b> <b>Reading</b>

# ■ My External Triggers

1. Mark and “**X**” in front of all the situations and places where you use drugs or alcohol frequently.  
Mark a “**0**” in front of those places and situations where you never use drugs or alcohol.

___ At parties	___ Before school	___ When I get up
___ At sporting events	___ During school	___ At lunch breaks
___ At the movies	___ After school	___ At dinner time
___ At bars or clubs	___ Before work	___ On payday
___ At the beach	___ During work	___ When I am carrying money
___ At concerts	___ After work	___ When I am watching TV
___ In parks	___ Before a date	___ When I see a certain person
___ In vacant buildings	___ During a date	___ When I talk to a certain person
___ In parking lots	___ After a date	___ When I am in a certain neighborhood
___ At home	___ Before sex	___ When I am with certain people
___ When I am alone	___ During sex	___ When I hear a certain song
___ When I am with a friend	___ After sex	___ On certain days of the year
___	___	___

2. List other situations or places where you use drugs or alcohol:

3. List the people who are triggers for you:

# CLEAR Thinking



**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Unhelpful Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# ■ My Internal Triggers

1. Mark and "X" in front of all the emotions that can trigger drug or alcohol thoughts or cravings for you. If something is missing that is a trigger for you, add it to the list.

<input type="checkbox"/> Afraid	<input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived
<input type="checkbox"/> Angry	<input type="checkbox"/> Criticized	<input type="checkbox"/> Lonely
<input type="checkbox"/> Guilty	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexually aroused	<input type="checkbox"/> Sorry for myself
<input type="checkbox"/> Worthless	<input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated	<input type="checkbox"/> Nervous
<input type="checkbox"/> Happy	<input type="checkbox"/> Sad	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident
<input type="checkbox"/> Calm	<input type="checkbox"/> Tired	<input type="checkbox"/> Depressed
<input type="checkbox"/> Excited	<input type="checkbox"/> Jealous	<input type="checkbox"/> Insecure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Which emotions triggered you t using drugs or alcohol in the last month?

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3. Which emotions are most likely to trigger you to use drugs or alcohol?

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4. Was there a time when you were trying to stay away from drugs or alcohol, when an emotion triggered you to use again?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what was the emotion or physical sensation? \_\_\_\_\_

# ■ How to Clean Your Needles and Syringes

## Materials:

1. Regular household bleach
2. Clean water

## Directions:

There are three steps to cleaning your needles and syringes. You should do each step three times.

### STEP 1: Water (Do this 3 times.)

- A. Fill syringe to the top with clean water.
- B. Shake the syringe.
- C. Squirt out. Repeat steps 1A-1C two more times.

### STEP 2: 100% Bleach (Do this 3 times.)

- A. Fill syringe to the top with clean, 100% bleach.
- B. Shake the syringe. Leave the bleach in for at least 30 seconds.
- C. Squirt out. Repeat steps 2A-2C two more times.

### STEP 3: Water (Do this 3 times.)

- A. Fill syringe to the top with clean water.
- B. Shake the syringe.
- C. Squirt out. Repeat steps 3A-3C two more times.

# ■ Needles and Your Health

**More Safe**



1. Stop using and injecting drugs
2. Enter and complete drug treatment
3. If you cannot stop injecting drugs use only new sterile syringes and never share syringes or other drug preparation equipment
4. If you do not have a new sterile syringe, properly clean a used one and all other equipment with bleach.

**Less Safe**

## ■ Tips to Prevent Overdose

- **Avoid mixing drugs.** Mixing drugs can lead to overdose especially if you mix drugs that have the same effect. Also, being high or drunk compromises your judgment and this too can lead you to overdose.
- **Learn how your HIV meds will interact with drugs and alcohol.** Some HIV meds can cause certain drugs to become more potent, leading to overdose.
- **If your health has worsened or you've lost weight, do a little less.** You will probably need less of the drug to get high.
- **Take control of your own preparation and intake.** You are the only one who really knows how much you can handle.
- **If you use drugs with others, let someone you are with know what drugs you take in case of an overdose.** If you must use alone, let a friend know so they can check in on you.
- **Come up with a plan with those you use with.** At what point to do you call 911?

# ■ Questions to Ask My Health Care Provider About My Drug Use

## What Should I Tell My Doctor Upfront About My Drug Use?

1. Let him or her know all of the substances you use and how often. This should include recreational drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, caffeine, vitamins, supplements, and herbal medicines.
2. Answer all of your doctor's questions honestly.

## Questions to Ask:

- As a person living with HIV, how do the drugs I take affect my health?
- I understand that HIV medications can interact with other substances. How will my medications interact with the substances I use?
- Adherence is very important to me, but I tend to skip doses when I'm partying. Am I a good candidate for a low maintenance regimen, like a one-a-day treatment?
- I know that the drug Sustiva can show up as a positive result for marijuana on some urine tests. Will my HIV medications show up as a positive result for drugs?

## Additional Questions:

## Other Resources To Get Your Questions Answered:

- Talk to your pharmacist.
- Local drug treatment centers:
  
- Local treatment advocate:



# ■ Using CLEAR Thinking to Help with My Medication Adherence

Practice replacing these unhelpful thoughts with CLEAR Thoughts:

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Unhelpful Thought: “I don’t take my pills when I am out in public because I don’t want anybody to start asking questions.”

Unhelpful Thought: “I hate putting up with the side effects. It’s not worth the aggravation.”

Unhelpful Thought: “I hate to think that I have to take all these pills forever.”

Unhelpful Thought: “There are too many things to keep track of; this is too overwhelming for me.”

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Practice replacing your unhelpful thoughts about medication with CLEAR Thoughts:

1. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# What Are My Current Medications?

	Medication	FT Reading						
Name								
No. of Pills								
Frequency								
Restrictions								
Side Effects								

# ■ HIV Medications Information Sheet

## What is HIV and What is AIDS?

1. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. When HIV gets into the bloodstream it invades CD4+ T-cells, or simply T-cells.
2. Once inside T-cells, HIV can make many new copies of itself.
3. The new copies then break out of the T-cells, destroying the T-cells in the process. The new copies then invade other T-cells, and the process of making new copies and destroying the T-cells continues.
4. Eventually, without treatment, the number of T-cells goes down and the number of HIV copies goes up. The number of HIV copies is called “viral load,” and the number of T-cells is called “T-cell count.”
5. When there aren't enough T-cells, the body has a hard time fighting off even minor infections. When the T-cell count gets really low, or the person with HIV starts getting certain infections that the body would normally fight off, they are said to have AIDS.

## What do HIV Medications Do?

1. There is no known cure for HIV Disease.
2. Medication and healthy living are the best ways to manage HIV disease, to stay as healthy as possible for as long as possible.
3. Most people living with HIV will eventually be prescribed a combination of medications. A combination of anti-HIV drugs is commonly called Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy, or HAART.
4. Each medication in combination therapy has a specific role in keeping the HIV from making copies of itself. The fewer copies of HIV in the blood, the fewer T-cells will be destroyed.
5. When your blood tests show that your viral load is going down, or that your T-cell count is going up, this means that your medications are working.
6. Many people living with HIV who consistently stick to their medication schedules have gotten their viral load down to what is called “undetectable” levels.
7. While this is great news, be aware that undetectable does not mean that the person is virus free. There is still some HIV in their blood and other body fluids, and they can still infect others. An undetectable viral level does not mean you can return to unprotected sex, or to discontinue medication unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

## Why is Staying on Schedule So Important?

1. In order for these medications to work, they need to be taken exactly as prescribed. “Close” is not close enough if the medications are to work at full strength against HIV.
2. Missing a single dose and/or being very late with a dose can sometimes have a negative effect on all future doses of that medication.
3. When you get off schedule with your meds, you give HIV a chance to start making copies of itself again. When this happens, there is a possibility that some of the new copies will be resistant to the medications. Resistance means the HIV will no longer be stopped by the drugs you were taking. Your doctor will then have to come up with another combination of drugs that the virus will respond to.
4. When HIV becomes resistant to one or more types of medications that reduces the options for successful treatment. And staying well becomes more and more challenging.

## What Does It Mean to Stay on Schedule?

1. There are three parts to your medication schedule:
  - a. The amount, or dose, of each type of medication you take.
  - b. When you are to take each dose.
  - c. How you are to take each dose.
2. You need to take your medications exactly as prescribed to ensure you get the most out of your treatment and so that you do not develop resistance to your drugs.
3. “Adherence” means taking drugs exactly as prescribed. The goal is to work on improving your medication adherence until you take the right amount of medication, at the right time, and in the right way, all of the time.
4. Here are some examples of what it means to be non-adherent:
  - a. Not taking the total number of pills prescribed for you on a given day.
  - b. You took all the pills you were supposed to take, but you were more than an hour late with one or more of your doses.
  - c. You were supposed to take one of your meds with food, but took a dose with only water.

# ■ Guidelines on Discussing Your Medications with Your Health Care Provider

**Four Things to do:** (Circle the points you already do well.)

1. Listen carefully.
2. Give information.
3. Ask questions.
4. Double check by stating your understanding of what the health care provider said.

**What should you tell your health care provider when you are being prescribed a medication?** (Circle the points you already do well.)

1. Tell your provider any concerns or reservations you have about taking the medication.
2. Tell your provider all the medications you are taking, including alcohol, over-the-counter drugs, recreational or party drugs, vitamins, and other complementary therapies.
3. If you use alcohol, or recreational or party drugs, it is essential that your health care provider know this. HIV medications can have fatal or extremely serious interactions with these substances.
4. Tell your provider if you have had any bad reactions to medications in the past.
5. Tell your provider if you have had any significant allergies or illnesses.
6. Tell your provider if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast feeding.

**What Your Doctor Should Tell You When Prescribing You A Medication**

(Circle the points your health care provider does well.)

1. Your doctor should tell you the name of the medication. Medications have both a generic name and a brand name. Many HIV medications also have a popular name. For example, the antiretroviral lamivudine (generic name) is known both as Epivir® (its brand name) and 3TC (its popular name)
2. Your doctor should tell you why he or she is prescribing the medication. You should know what benefits you may receive and when.
3. Your doctor should tell you how to take the medication, that is, how much, how often, with what, for how long, and what to do if you miss a dose.
4. Your doctor should tell you about possible side effects to your medication and how to recognize and deal with them.

In a few rare cases, side effects can be extremely dangerous and need immediate medical attention. Your provider should inform you of this. If you have questions, ask them!

5. Your doctor should tell you if there are any precautions you should follow (that is, if there are any foods, beverages, activities, other medications, or recreational or party drugs to avoid while on medication).

# ■ Applying CLEAR Thinking in My Communication with My Health Care Provider

Practice replacing these unhelpful thoughts with CLEAR Thoughts:

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Unhelpful Thought: “My doctor will judge me or get mad if I tell him that I Have not been perfectly adherent to my medication.”

Unhelpful Thought: “If my doctor gets upset, it is because he cares about my well-being and wants what’s best for me. I’m not the only patient he has who struggles with being perfectly adherent.”

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Practice replacing your unhelpful thoughts about medication with CLEAR Thoughts:

1. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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CLEAR Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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CLEAR Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Unhelpful Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLEAR Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## ■ Stigma Cards

PROJECT  
CLEAR

**“I guess getting the virus is God’s way of punishing me.”**

1

PROJECT  
CLEAR

**“If I weren’t sexually attracted to other men, I wouldn’t be HIV positive.”**

2

## ■ Stigma Cards

PROJECT  
| CLEAR

**“I’m so ashamed that I’m HIV positive, I can’t face anybody.”**

3

PROJECT  
| CLEAR

**“I’ve been partying hard for years. Now that I have HIV, I guess my sins are finally catching up with me.”**

4