

Doctor Discussion Questions

Time spent with your health care provider is valuable. Prepare for your office visit by printing this list of questions for your doctor. Because your doctor may not have time to answer all your questions, read through the list and circle those questions that are of the greatest importance to you. You may also write additional questions at the bottom of the page.

Lifestyle

- What does an undetectable viral load mean?
- Must I still practice safe sex if my viral load is undetectable?
- How can I reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others?
- Will I have to avoid certain foods?
- Should I take vitamin or mineral supplements?
- Can you refer me to a social services caseworker or someone who can help me manage the financial aspects of my health care?
- I'd like to join an HIV/AIDS support group. Do you know of one in the area?
- I'm not sure I'm eating well enough. Can you recommend a nutritionist?
- Can I exercise? What type of exercise can I do right now?
- I'm feeling a little depressed. Can you recommend a therapist?
- What can you suggest for stress reduction?
- There are people I need to tell about being HIV positive, and I don't know how to begin. Any suggestions?
- I don't want to look like I have HIV. What can I do about this?
- I don't feel I'm getting the support I need from my family and friends. What can I do?

Treatment

- When should I start treatment?
- How will I know if my HIV treatment is working?
- Is anyone ever able to stop taking medicines entirely?
- How do HIV medicines work?
- What are the most common side effects associated with my medicine?
- Should I be taking once-daily or twice-daily dosing?
- What are the serious side effects of my medicine?
- Is it possible that I may experience mild side effects or none at all?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- What other diseases or conditions am I at risk for?
- I'm taking medications for conditions other than HIV infection. Can I keep taking them?
- Is there any medication, prescription or over-the-counter (including herbal products and vitamins), that I should avoid taking?
- What if my HIV medication stops working?
- How will I know if my HIV medication stops working?
- What is drug resistance and what can I do to help?
- Under which conditions would I have to change medications?
- Can I get help paying for my medicines?

Emergency Care

- How do I reach you in an emergency?
- When you're not available, whom should I call?
- When is the best time to call if I have a question or a problem that is not an emergency?

Women

- How often should I get a gynecological exam and a Pap test?
- Will my HIV medicines interact with my birth control?
- What if I get pregnant? How could HIV treatment affect my baby?

Testing

- What HIV tests do I need? What are they for? When will you give me the results?
- How often should I have my CD4 cell levels and viral load checked?
- How often should I get tested for drug resistance?
- What else will you monitor? Is there anything I should keep track of?
- How often should I be tested for tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases?
- Will I be getting a complete physical checkup on a regular basis?