

SHOULD I START ANTIRETROVIRAL TREATMENT?



If you have HIV, starting treatment is an important moment. This sheet provides you with information with which to understand the implications of starting the treatment for your health.

01 WHY TAKE TREATMENT?

Treatment reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load). This will mean you can live longer and will improve your health and quality of life. What is more, if your viral load remains constantly undetectable, the chances of you passing the virus onto other people are practically zero.

Once you have started treatment, you must take it every day as part of your daily routine. Most people find it easy to take anti-HIV medication.

If you are not taking treatment yet, starting it represents an important decision that you should consider.

02 SIDE EFFECTS

It is likely that when you start taking treatment, you will be affected with nausea, discomfort or diarrhoea. This is because your body is "getting used to" the medication. These side effects are generally light and can be treated although they disappear on their own in just a few weeks. If they last for a long time or get worse, consult your doctor.

There are, however other side effects that may appear over time. In addition to measuring viral load and CD4 levels, medical check-ups will ensure these effects do not affect your health and quality of life.

03 WHEN TO START

It is now known that the sooner you start treatment, the better it is for your health. However, unless there is a medical emergency, you should take your time and talk to your doctor about all the aspects that concern you about treatment and any doubts you may have before starting it.

04 IMPORTANT FACTS:

- Treatment will help to improve your immunity and reduce that chance of passing HIV on to your sexual partners.
- You should therefore always take it as indicated by your doctor.
- You should do periodic tests to check that treatment is working and to control possible side effects.
- If you are following HIV treatment, you should ask before taking any other medication in order to avoid interaction.
- Starting treatment is a decision you should take when you feel ready. Nobody should feel forced or obliged to start taking it.

gt grupo de trabajo sobre tratamientos del VIH
ENTIDAD DECLARADA DE UTILIDAD PÚBLICA
ONG DE DESARROLLO

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