

Shared decision making for people living with HIV



What is shared decision making?

Shared decision making (SDM) means **you (patient) and your health care provider (doctor) work together as a team to make choices about your HIV treatment and care.**



Why is shared decision making important?

- Your health. Your choices:** You know best what matters most to you — whether it's your lifestyle, values, or preferences.
- Better understanding:** Learn about your condition. Evaluate the benefits, limitations, and risks involved in each option.
- Open communication:** Have conversations with your doctor. Share what is important to you. Make informed medical decisions that are right for you.
- Being involved:** Decisions you make with your doctor are more likely to fit your lifestyle and treatment goals. When you follow through, this leads to treatment success and better health outcomes.



Your role in shared decision making

- Be open about your concerns, lifestyle, and preferences.
- Ask questions and understand your options.
- Share what matters most to you (medication burden, side effects, cost, etc.).
- Prepare for your appointments and write down any questions.
- Speak up if you feel uncertain, change your mind, or want more information.



Questions to ask your doctor

- What are my treatment options and the benefits/risks of each option?
- How might these treatments affect my lifestyle and well-being?
- What should I do if I experience side effects?
- How will I know if the treatment is working?
- How can I reduce the risk of other infections or complications?
- What is “Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)” and what does this mean for me?
- How can I maintain an undetectable viral load, so I can stay healthy and reduce the risk of transmission to others?

Remember: You have a voice and play an important role in every decision about your health.