



## **STARTING COMBINATION THERAPY (THE AIDS COCKTAIL)**

### **A big decision**

Starting the AIDS cocktail will mean you will have to make some changes in your life. Some medicines in the AIDS cocktail have to be taken two or three times every day. Some of them must be taken with food, others need to be taken in between big meals.

When you start taking your medicines, for a while at least, you will have to focus on taking them at the right times. You will get used to it and in time it will just become another thing you do every day. Your doctor, nurse or CHR may know of ways to make this time easier. If they don't have any suggestions, ask them who you can ask who might know.

### **Don't rush into your decision**

The best time to start the AIDS cocktail is when you decide that you are ready. This means that you have talked to your doctor and understand what you need to do to take your medicine safely.

It may take some time for you to decide to start. The most important thing is that you understand that waiting too long to start may put your health at risk. Work with your doctor or nurse to figure out when the best time to start is for you.



## Information for Inuit Community Members Fact Sheet 2 HIV/AIDS Treatment



### Getting ready – start with candy

Here is a useful trick some people use to figure out the best way to take their AIDS cocktail:

- ❖ Get candy, such as jelly beans or Smarties, and label them like the medicine you are going to take.
- ❖ Use a different colour of candy for a different medication.
- ❖ Practice taking the candy the way your doctor has told you to take your medication. Practicing for a few weeks can help you get a better idea of what it will be like to take the AIDS cocktail and what times might be best for you.

### Common questions about the AIDS cocktail:

**Q: I have a friend who has HIV but he takes different medicines than me. Why?**

**A:** The simplest reason is that everyone's body is different. Not everyone who has HIV or AIDS takes the same medicine.

**Never share your medicine with someone else.**

**Q: Why is my doctor changing my medicines?**

**A:** Your doctor may change your medication for a lot of reasons. They may not be working as well as he or she hoped or there may be new medications that will work better for you.

**Q: I hate taking this stuff and I want to quit. What should I do?**

**A:** Find support. Talk about your feelings to your doctor, nurse and CHR. It is also important to tell your doctor how the medicines are making you feel.

### Credits

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*This is one of a series of information updates for Inuit community members to learn more about the medicines and other kinds of treatments some people with HIV/AIDS use to fight HIV and AIDS. If you have questions or want more information, talk to your doctor, nurse or CHR.*

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