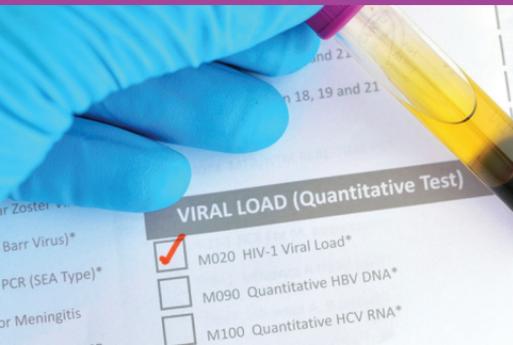
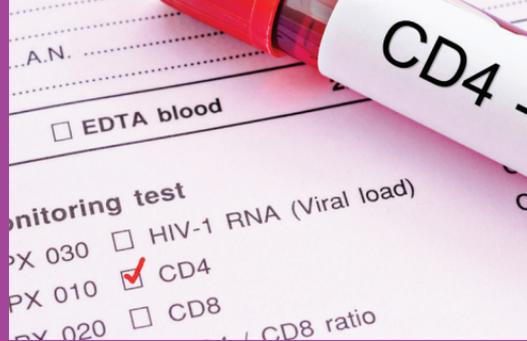


I am a 26 year old black male born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I was diagnosed with HIV in 2008. I started taking meds daily in 2011 after I had a scare and was admitted into the hospital. I promised myself from then on that I would always take care of myself, and take my medications as prescribed.

At first it was easy because I had convinced myself to uphold a promise. After I finally got to the undetectable stage, to me it seemed okay to miss a dose or two. I didn't pay much attention but I was missing more and more doses because I was always out kickin it with my friends, or I never had the pills on me when I needed to take them. The pill that I was on

at the time was Atripla, and with this pill I had to take one every day at the same time. I would always miss the time because of kickin it with my people. The reality was I never got around to taking the pill.

For a while I just quit taking the medications and was scared to go to the doctor because of the results that I would get, mostly because I was embarrassed. I ended up going back eventually, but my CD4 count went back down and my viral load went all the way up. My doctor ended up switching my meds to Complera and for a while it was working, but with this new pill you had to take it at the same time and with food every day. Eventually I messed up that pill too because of my finances,



my different eating habits, and challenges with time management, and all those things that I thought were important.

As of today, I am on a medication called Genvoya that seems to be the best fit for me. This medication gives me more flexibility as far as when I can take the pill and not being required to take it with food. Something that I now have in place are a few people helping me remember to take my pill. I also have my partner who currently takes PrEP, so when he takes his pill he reminds me that I should take mine too. This has been so helpful and for over a year I have not missed any doses. Also my health has improved a lot and my viral load has returned to the undetectable stage. After all of the struggles, I am happy that I found what works for me.

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