

Guidance for Young People on Managing Taking HIV Medicine: Amanda Ely: July 2015.

These tips on managing taking HIV medicine were provided by young people living with HIV as part of the “Treat me like this” Youth Guidelines Group Project. These are the positive aspects of taking medicine the young people identified:

- **“Medicine prolongs your life”**
- **“Keeps your immune system healthy and your HIV virus low”**
- **“Makes it more difficult to pass HIV on to others when you take your HIV medicine”**
- **“Helps you live a normal life”**
- **“Keeps you out of hospital”**

These are aspects of taking HIV medicine that young people described as being more difficult:

- **“The side effects”**
- **“When medicines have a horrible taste”**
- **“Having to take it every day”**
- **“It is easy to forget”**
- **“Friends are curious and it can be difficult to explain”**
- **“Thinking ‘what’s the point’ not really believing the health benefits”**
- **“Sometimes it can feel like an unpaid job”**
- **“Can remind you of HIV and this is unpleasant for some people”**

Young people came up with some tips to help with some of these difficulties:

- **“Take the meds with something else that tastes good like ice cream or sweets. Don’t put them straight on your tongue.”**
- **“Having your meds somewhere easy to access and visible, (not hidden away). It is a lot easier if all your family know about your HIV and you don’t have to hide your medicine.”**
- **“Think about who can help to motivate you to take your medicine? You need to talk to people about how you are feeling, try to get support and also think about the future you want.”**
- **“One young person had a specific tip: I have a drawing on my wall of all my favourite things and it helps me remember why I take my meds”.**
- **“What to say to friends? Truths are important but you don’t have to say everything.....“I have a problem with my immune system and I take meds for it.”**
- **“Think about doing an HIV awareness raising event at school or college e.g around World AIDS day – it will help raise peoples understanding.”**
- **“You can make sure you reward yourself with a treat when you have done well taking your medicine, for example at the end of each month.”**