

Don't be afraid to be part of decisions about your treatment and care

As you age with HIV, you have an increased risk of developing other health conditions, so it's more important than ever before to speak up about your personal health care needs and ask for the best care for you. With an increasing focus on prevention in the NHS Long Term Plan¹, being involved in your treatment and care can improve your own long-term health and support a more efficient health service for the future. Your doctors and nurses will have your best interests in mind but they need your support to help make decisions about your care and treatment, so **don't be afraid to think about what you need to support your long-term health with HIV and ask questions at your next appointment.**

...Treating Me Right?

In order to help you think about what questions to ask, this short guide highlights **three rights from the NHS Constitution**, an important document that explains the rights that all NHS England patients have.²

You have the right to:

Treatment that meets **your needs and preferences**

Talk to your doctor or nurse about what is important to you, so you can work together to choose the best treatment for you.

Do you have needs relating to your age and lifestyle when choosing treatment? This could include travel, work and family life.

Are you taking any medication for another condition which could change what treatment you need?

If so, does the amount of pills you take affect your HIV treatment preferences?

Does your treatment need to fit around your job or social activities?

What is going to be important to you as you age with HIV, and what additional support might you need?

Be **involved in making decisions** about your health care

Ask your doctor or nurse questions and tell them what you think and feel so you are part of every decision.

Have you made a list of questions to talk through with your doctor or nurse?

Are there questions you are reluctant to ask or topics that are difficult to bring up? If so, explain this to your doctor or nurse and let them help you to get the answers you need.

Have you taken enough time to think about your treatment options?

Would it be helpful to take notes at your appointment so you can remind yourself about what you discussed?

Be given information about all the **treatment options** available to you

You should be given all the information you need to make decisions about treatment with your doctor or nurse. It's always okay to ask for more information.

Do you understand the information you have been given, or do you have any unanswered questions?

Have you asked what other treatment options are available to you on the NHS?

Is there someone else you can speak to that can help you discuss your treatment with your doctor or nurse?

Does your treatment meet your health, lifestyle and personal needs?

Have you thought about planning for your long-term health and asked the right questions about living well with HIV?

You should be involved in every decision about your treatment. Make sure you understand the information you are given and work with your doctor or nurse to make the right decision for you. **Don't be afraid. Be heard in decisions about your HIV health. Be treated right.**

These are just some of your rights covered under Section 3a of the NHS Constitution.

For the full list see: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england

References

1. The King's Fund. Understanding NHS financial pressures. Available from: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/understanding-nhs-financial-pressure> (last accessed October 2019)
2. The NHS Constitution for England. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england (last accessed October 2019)

