

## **When should I start treatment? / NAM.**

### **Contributors**

National AIDS Manual (Organisation)

### **Publication/Creation**

London : NAM, 2009.

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/evr9qgx5>

### **License and attribution**

Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

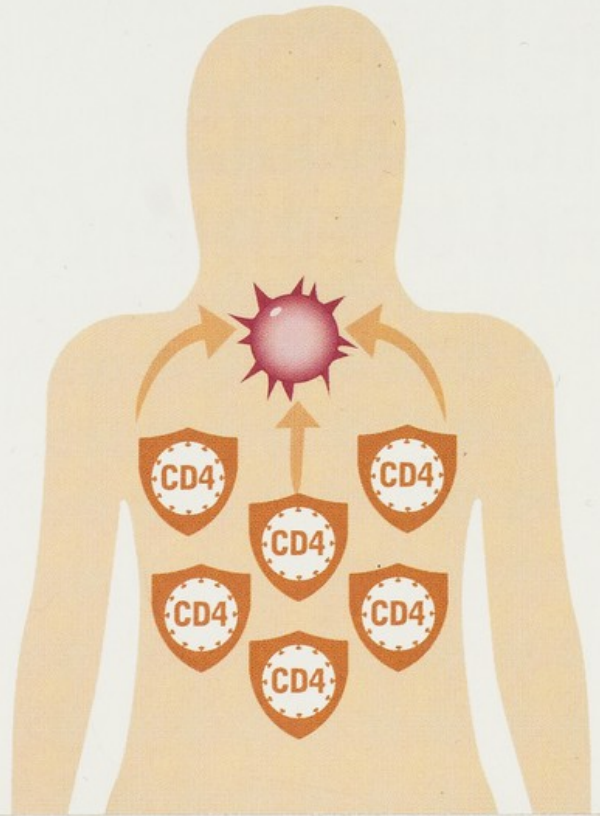
**nam** [www.aidsmap.com](http://www.aidsmap.com)

**the basics**  
when should I  
start treatment?



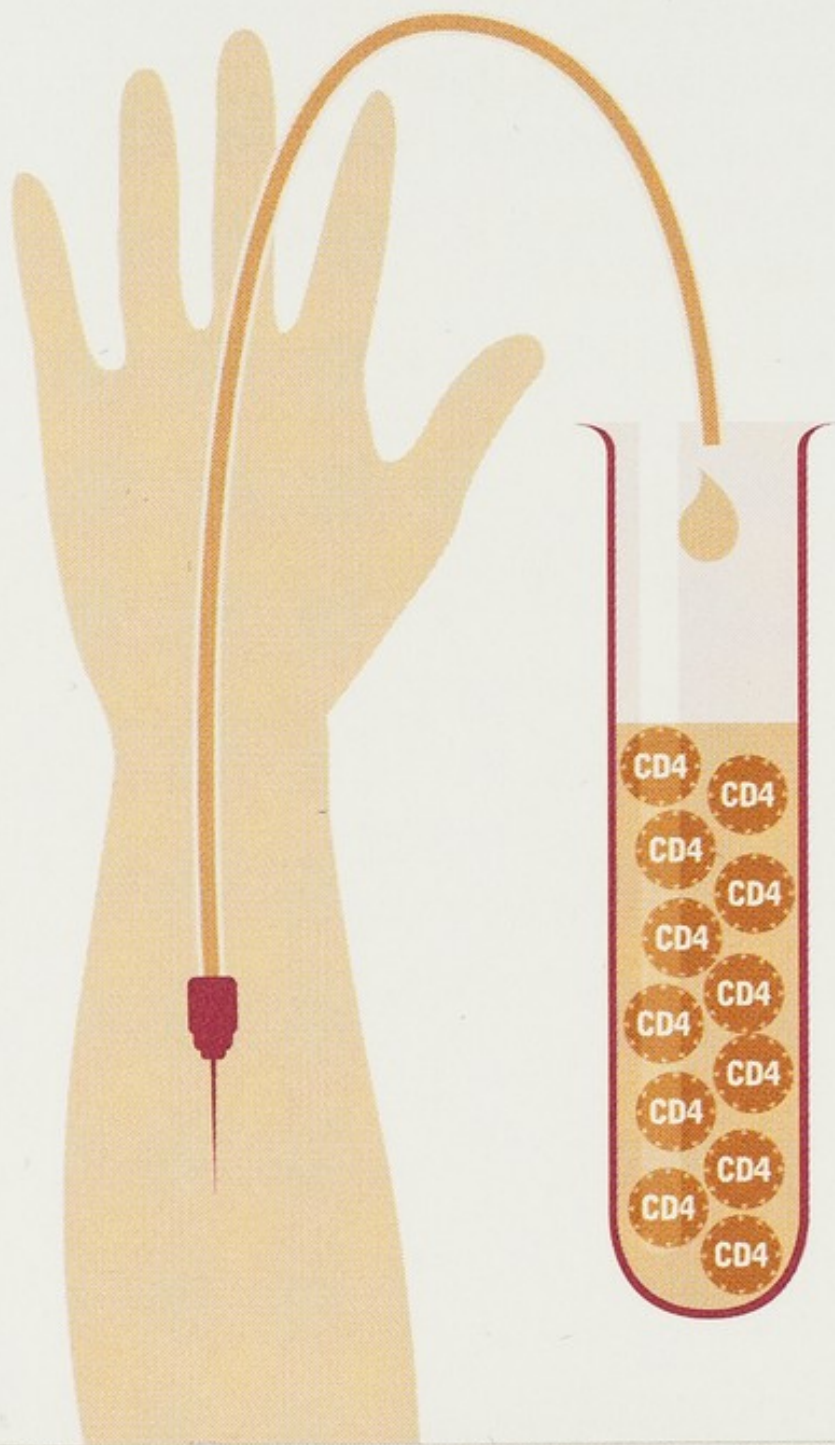
**You may not need to take HIV treatment straight away. It depends on the effect HIV has had on your immune system.**

- 1** The immune system is the body's natural defence system. When it is strong, it can fight off infections and illnesses on its own.

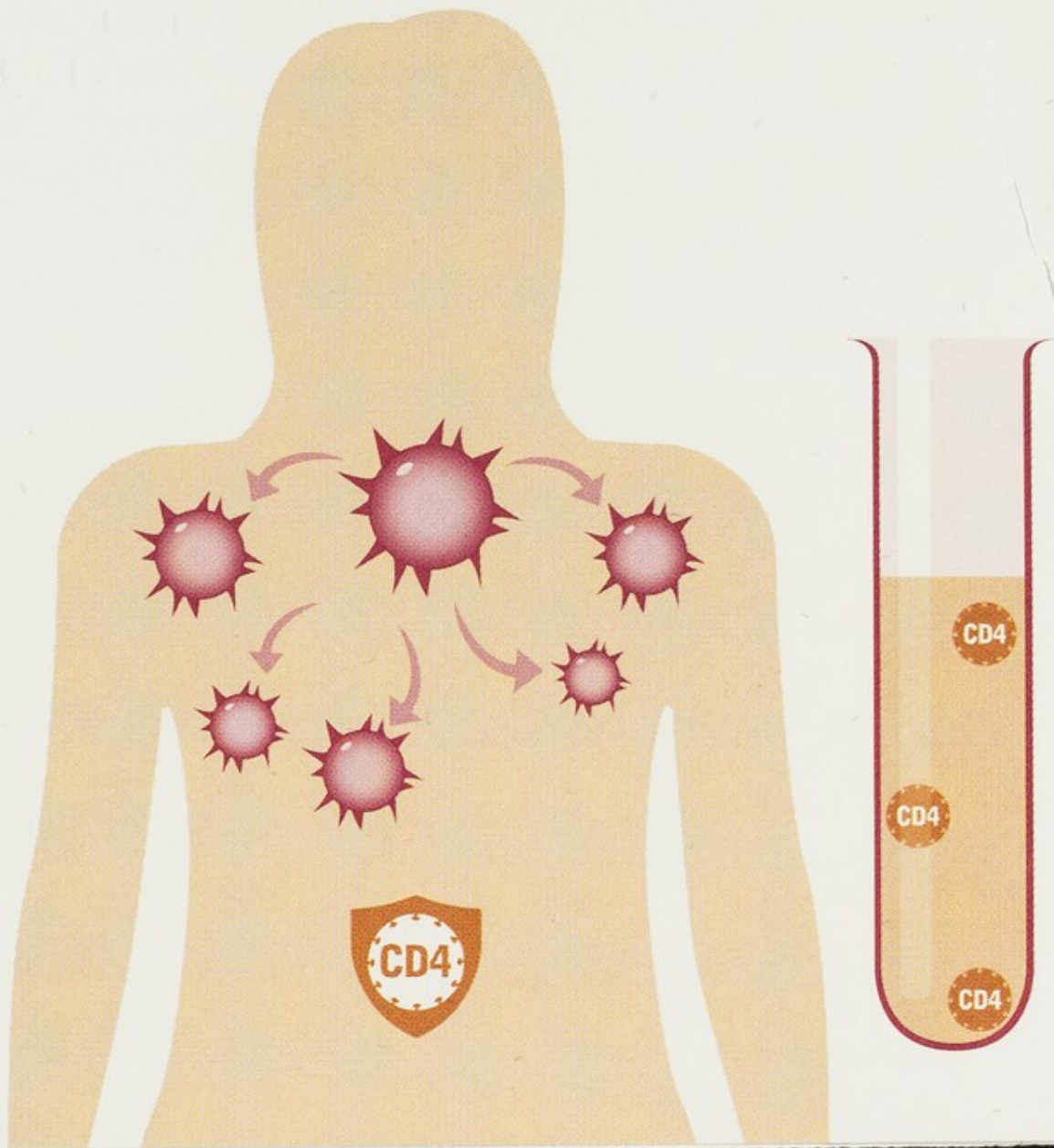


2

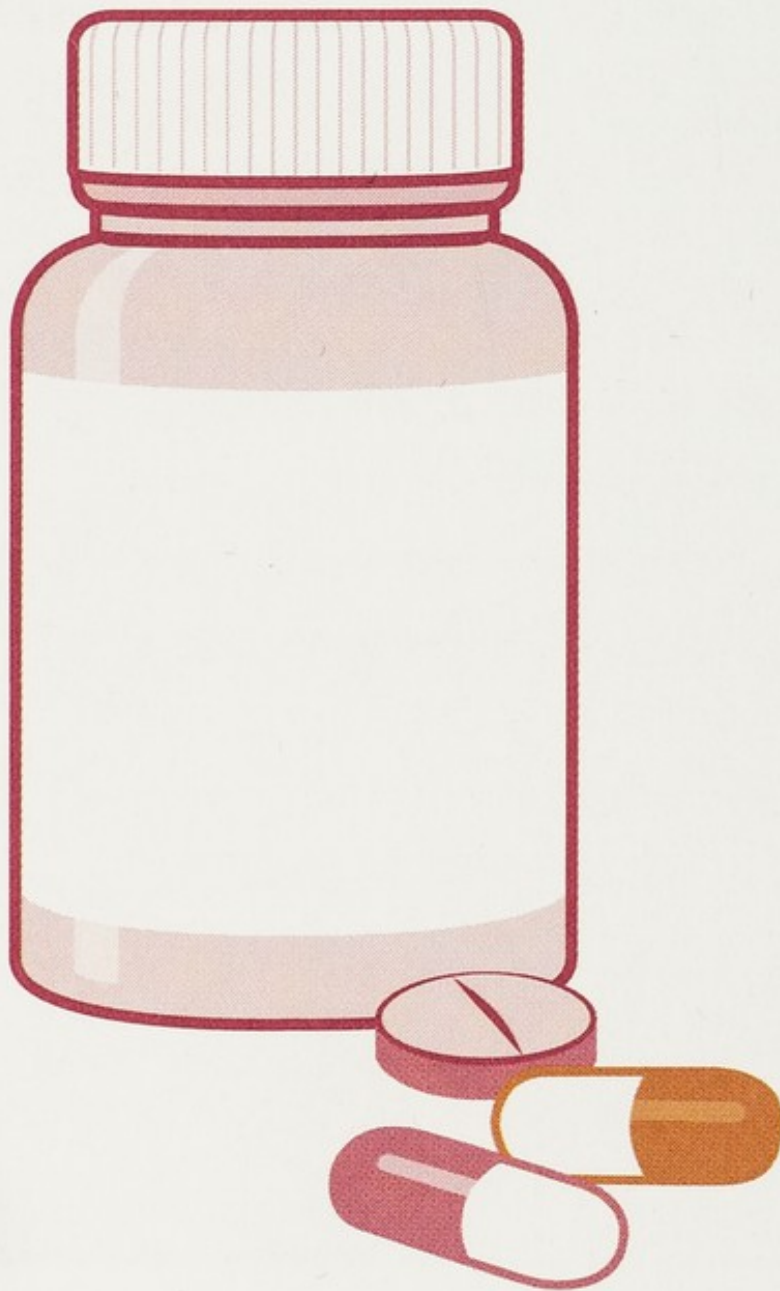
The CD4 count is a blood test that gives information about your immune system. A high CD4 count means your immune system is strong.



- 3** If your CD4 count is low, this means HIV has weakened your immune system.



- 4 If your CD4 count goes below 350, starting treatment is recommended.

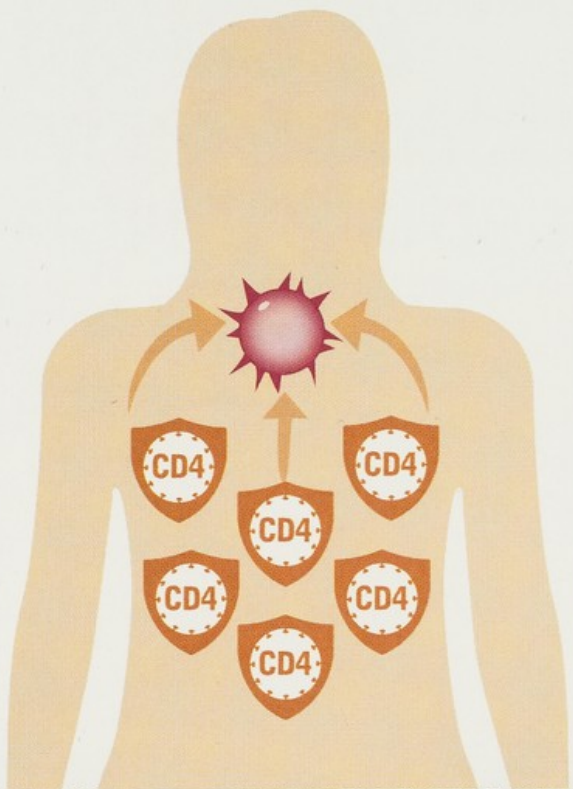


5

HIV treatment involves taking pills at the same time every single day. You need to feel ready for this commitment.



- 6** HIV treatment will strengthen your immune system. It will be able to fight off infections and illnesses again.



## Important points

- British medical guidelines recommend starting treatment when the CD4 count goes below 350.
- Taking treatment will prevent further damage to your immune system, and will mean there is less risk of getting ill in the future.



## Notes

Starting HIV treatment is recommended for everyone who has a CD4 count below 350 and who feels ready to start. It's particularly recommended if your CD4 count is below 200.

Your doctor or another health-care worker will be able to answer any questions you have about HIV treatment and help you work out whether you're ready to start.

Sometimes people start treatment when the CD4 count is above 350. Your doctor may recommend this if:

- HIV is making you ill
- you have another health problem like hepatitis or diabetes
- you are at high risk of heart disease
- you are aged over 50, or
- you are in a relationship with someone who does not have HIV (treatment reduces the risk of HIV being passed on).

## Want to find out more?

### For more information on this topic:

- read NAM's fact sheet 'Starting HIV Treatment'
- read NAM's booklet 'HIV Therapy'
- read Terrence Higgins Trust's booklet 'Your Treatment', or
- speak to an adviser at THT Direct (phone: 0845 12 21 200).

**For more information about HIV**, NAM provides free fact sheets, information booklets, e-mail bulletins, a monthly newsletter, a comprehensive website (**[aidsmap.com](http://aidsmap.com)**) and a website specifically for people living with HIV (**[namlife.org](http://namlife.org)**).

**Contact us** by calling 020 7840 0050 or by sending an e-mail to [info@nam.org.uk](mailto:info@nam.org.uk)

**Has this resource been useful to you?** Please let us know what you think by visiting [www.aidsmap.com/feedback](http://www.aidsmap.com/feedback), by phoning us or by sending an e-mail. Your feedback helps us to improve the services we offer you.

**NAM**

Lincoln House  
1 Brixton Road  
London SW9 6DE

**Phone:** 020 7840 0050

**Fax:** 020 7735 5351

**Website:** [www.aidsmap.com](http://www.aidsmap.com)

**E-mail:** [info@nam.org.uk](mailto:info@nam.org.uk)

**Thanks to the following organisations that have funded this leaflet.**

NHS Pan-London HIV  
Prevention Programme and  
NHS South West Essex

**Copyright** ©NAM 2009.

If you need extra copies of this fact sheet, or would like to translate, adapt or reproduce it, please contact us.

**Charity number** 1011220

