

Voices of Experience: Living with HIV

DOUG

“It’s been a struggle.”

This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

My name is Doug, and I've been living with HIV, I know, for the past 22 years. Back in the '80s, when I went in for an HIV test, it wasn't recommended that you get tested for HIV because there was no effective medications and there were still discrimination possibilities. But I came down with shingles, so I went in and got an HIV test, and it came back positive. I was fortunate enough that my doctor recommended that I go to NIH for clinical trials, because at that time, the only approved medication was AZT, and I wasn't eligible for it. But because I went through the clinical trials, I was able to get on experimental medications that have now been FDA-approved, and I'm here today, I think, because of the effective medications and my adherence to those medications. But it's been a struggle because in 1995 I was forced to go out on disability because my health was declining. But then in '96, with the introduction of the protease inhibitors, it completely changed my life. It restored my energy, my health, and motivated me to become more active in the community. I now do volunteer work with different AIDS service organizations, communicating with other people the importance of taking their medications and staying involved and educated about HIV. So, for me, my immune system now is restored back to what it was prior to HIV, and I feel that I will live long-term with HIV.

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