

Table 12. Strategies to Improve Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy

Strategies	Examples
Use a multidisciplinary team approach Provide an accessible, trusting health care team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurses, social workers, pharmacists, and medication managers
Establish a trusting relationship with the patient	
Establish readiness to start ART	
Identify potential barriers to adherence prior to starting ART	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychosocial issues • Active substance abuse or at high risk of relapse • Low literacy level • Busy daily schedule and/or travel away from home • Lack of disclosure of HIV diagnosis • Skepticism about ART • Lack of prescription drug coverage
Provide resources for the patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals for mental health and/or substance abuse treatment • Resources to obtain prescription drug coverage • Pillboxes
Involve the patient in antiretroviral (ARV) regimen selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each option, review potential side effects, dosing frequency, pill burden, storage requirements, food requirements, and consequences of nonadherence
Assess adherence at every clinic visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a simple checklist the patient can complete in the waiting room • Have other members of the health care team also assess adherence • Ask the patient open-ended questions (e.g., <i>In the last 3 days, please tell me how you took your medicines.</i>)
Identify the type of nonadherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to fill the prescription(s) • Failure to take the right dose(s) at the right time(s) • Nonadherence to food requirements
Identify reasons for nonadherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse effects from medications • Complexity of regimen (pill burden, dosing frequency, etc.) • Difficulty swallowing large pills • Forgetfulness • Failure to understand dosing instructions • Inadequate understanding of drug resistance and its relationship to adherence • Pill fatigue • Other potential barriers (see list above)
Assess and simplify regimen, if possible	