

## **Journey to Injectable Drugs**

I have waited 30 years for injectable drugs to happen in the HIV community - I just didn't know it would happen in my lifetime.

When I was around 10 years old, I was taking roughly 27 pills a day. Yep, you didn't read that wrong. HIV drugs in the early 90s were just awful. Being asked to take that many drugs when you're so little is hard - even if you're an adult, it would be hard! I did it, though, and as the years went on, the drugs got better. By high school, I was taking only 6 a day. Then in my early 30s, I was down to just 1 pill day. Wow, I have come so far over the course of medicine taking.

Then came an opportunity of a lifetime when a drug called Cabenuva came out. Turns out this drug was a shot, and you could get it every 2 months and not have to take a single pill. I was so ready for this, and felt so done with taking medicine every day. Thirty years of taking pills does have an effect on you. Fun fact: I still can't take pills with water because the taste of medicine has a lasting effect on me. It's milk or Gatorade, or anything besides water.

I now enjoy my life in my 40s never worried about "Did I take my medicine last night?" or if I've packed it for trips. It's with me all the time in my body, and all it takes is a shot every 2 months. Now this might not be an option for some folks that would prefer not to get poked more than they already do. Or maybe they have drug resistance to the shot. For myself and my lifestyle, this injectable HIV drug has been my saving grace. I'll never go back to pills again unless there is no other option.