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"This Above All... To Thine Own Self Be True. And it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

• Shakespeare / Hamlet / I / III

Michael Alvear



Testing Positive

**What Are the Chances?
What are the Odds?**

Testing Positive
. The chances you'll die if you don't go on medication: High.

. The chances you'll live if you do go on medication: High.

Side Effects: Medication

. The chances you'll get diarrhea: 20% to 30%
. The chances you'll experience nausea and vomiting: 20% to 40%
. The chances you'll experience dizziness: 10% to 30%.

Side Effects: Cruising

. The number of hot guys who will go home with you even after you disclose your status: Unknown.
. The number of hot guys who will go home with you but will first want to go the bathroom: Many.
. The number of hot guys who will climb out the bathroom window while you're waiting for them: Unknown.

Side Effects: Medication

. The chances you'll get headaches: 10% to 20%
. The chances you'll get respiratory congestion: 30% to 50%
. The chances you'll get unexplained rashes: 40% to 60%

Side Effects: Friendships

. The number of thirsty people who will pause when you offer them a sip from your water bottle: Most.
. The number of thirsty people who will actually sip from your bottle: Unknown.

Side Effects: Sex

. The number of people who experience lowered or non-existent sex drives when they go on medications: Many.
. The number of people who have to take testosterone shots to improve their libidos: Many.
. The number of people for whom testosterone shots don't help: Many.

Side Effects: Medication

. Percent of people who will develop anemia as a secondary condition: Unknown.
. Recommended weekly dose of intrave-



© Dean Lance

nous or subcutaneous injection for the treatment of that anemia: Three.

Side Effects: Career

. The chances you can switch jobs and maintain your health insurance with your new "pre-existing" condition: Slim.
. The chances of getting health insurance after you leave your job to open up the business you've always dreamed about: None.

Side Effects: Personal

. The likelihood that you'll have to read fewer novels, play fewer sports and see fewer movies so you can be conversant in more personally relevant issues like lipodystrophy, peripheral neurologic symptoms, gamma interferon, pneumocystis pneumonia, osteonecrosis, neuropathy, and fatal

and non-fatal

pancreatis: 100%.

. Percent of people who will develop disfiguring fat deposits on their necks or stomachs: Unknown.

. The chances that you'll end up knowing what the acronym HAART stands for: High.

Side Effects: Anxiety

. The likelihood that you'll fret over the concept of "treatment interruption": High.

. The chances that you'll be so scared of rejection you'll only want to date people with the same condition: Moderate.

. Percent of people who will experience fear and guilt that they may infect their lover or boyfriend: 100%.

. The number of people who will face yet another thing they'll want to keep from their parents: Unknown.

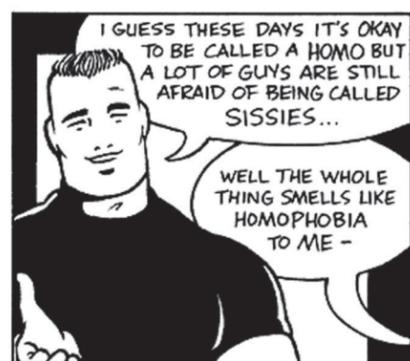
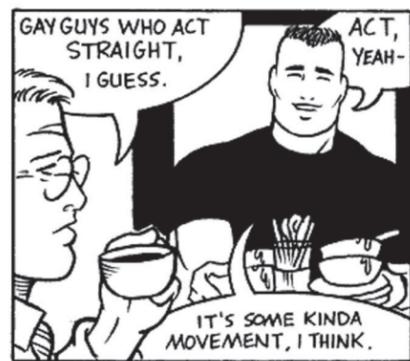
. The number of people who will continue to live life as they know it: zero.

Welcome To HIV.

The "Manageable" Disease

Michael Alvear lives with Zoey & Zack, his lesbian Labrador and girlie-boy Vizsla. He can be reached at mikealvear@aol.com

adam & andy by james asal



The Express Stylebook Policy

For the sake of readable newswriting, the word "gay" in 'The Express' should, when relevant, be interpreted to be inclusive of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, transgendered people, two-spirited people, intersexed people, men-who-have-sex-with-men, women-who-have-sex-with-women, queers, homosexuals, sexual minorities, and people who are unsure of their sexual orientation, but think they might be gay. Here is an example: "Toronto's gay-pride parade is bigger than Vancouver's."