Charlie Sheen and Dr. Robert Huizenga of UCLA Medical Center discuss the actor's HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) positive diagnosis and what he is doing to help treat the virus. This video may not be appropriate for younger viewers.

Keywords
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Transcript

Charlie Sheen and Doctor Discuss HIV Positive Announcement

MATT LAUER, anchor:
Now more of our exclusive conversation with Charlie Sheen. In our last half hour, he shared a very personal announcement, that he is HIV positive. He decided to speak out now in part because, he says, he didn't want to live in fear that someone else would divulge it. Charlie is back now along with his personal physician Doctor Robert Huizenga, an assistant professor of clinical medicine-- medicine, excuse me, at UCLA. And we want to warn people that some of our conversation may contain adult subject matter.

Before I get to you, doctor, you made this announcement in our last half hour. Are you feeling relieved?

CHARLIE SHEEN: More-- more than I-- than I thought possible.

LAUER: You feel good about it?

SHEEN: Very much so.

LAUER: Doctor, how long have you been working with Charlie?

DR. ROBERT HUIZENGA (UCLA Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine): I've known Charlie probably five, six years.

LAUER: This is an educational moment. We are in 2015 and while no one wants a diagnosis of being HIV positive, people live long, normal, productive lives while they carry the-- the virus. What is his exact medical condition now and we should mention, Charlie has given you permission to talk about this.

DR. HUIZENGA: Charlie has contracted the HIV virus. He was immediately put on treatment, strong antiviral drugs which have suppressed the virus. Unfortunately, we don't have a cure yet. It suppressed the virus to the point that he is absolutely healthy from that vantage. And my biggest concern with Charlie as a patient is substance abuse and depression from the disease more than what the HIV virus could do in
terms of shortening his life because it's not going to.
LAUER: Let's take those things one at a time. So you're saying to me at the moment Charlie has an undetectable level of the virus in his blood.
SHEEN: Right.
DR. HUIZENGA: That is absolutely correct.
LAUER: There have been some media outlets over the last couple of days speculating that Charlie has AIDS.
DR. HUIZENGA: Charlie does not have AIDS. AIDS is the condition when the HIV virus markedly suppresses the immune system and you're susceptible to rare difficult cancers. And in fact, since Charlie has none of those, he is healthy. He does not have HIV-- he does not have AIDS.
LAUER: Some very important information now. Charlie said in our last half hour that he--it is impossible for him to transmit this virus to someone else. I assume you meant through even unprotected sex?
SHEEN: I meant through protected sex.
LAUER: Through protected sex.
SHEEN: Yes.
LAUER: Is that accurate?
DR. HUIZENGA: Individuals who are optimally treated, who have undetectable viral loads who responsibly use protection have an incredibly low, it's incredibly rare to transmit the virus. We can't say that that's zero but it's a very, very low number.
LAUER: Because in checking with the CDC, they say the virus can still hide in genital fluids and the level of virus can go up and down between testing. Is that fair to say?
DR. HUIZENGA: That's fair to say. However, if someone is conscientious, and we have done repeated labs every several months over the last four years, then the odds of variations in between drug tests and lab tests would have to also be expected to be very, very low.
LAUER: Charlie, are you taking the so-called Triple Cocktail? Is that what medication you're on?
SHEEN: Every day.
LAUER: How many pills are you taking each day?
SHEEN: Four.
LAUER: Are you worried-- you talked about his drug abuse and alcohol -- first of all, are you still doing drugs?
SHEEN: No, I'm not. No.
LAUER: Are you still drinking?
SHEEN: I'm still drinking a little bit, yeah. Yeah.
LAUER: Are you worried that in an impaired state that Charlie will simply lapse on taking his medication and it impairs your judgment, can he be trusted, and I'm talking with him right here.
SHEEN: Sure.
LAUER: Can he be trusted to continue to take that medicine on a regular basis--
DR. HUIZENGA: I think worry--
LAUER: --if he continues to drink and perhaps do drugs?
DR. HUIZENGA: --worry is the right word. We're petrified about Charlie. We're-- we're so, so anxious that if he was overly depressed, if he was abusing substance, he would forget these pills, and that's been an incredible worry and-- and magically somehow in the midst of incredible personal mayhem he's managed to continue to take these medications.

LAUER: Over the course of four years you took-- you have never missed--
SHEEN: I've not. No.

LAUER: --taking your medication?
SHEEN: I've not. No, never once. No.

LAUER: A lot of people then look and say Charlie, you should stop drinking. You say you stopped doing drugs. You need to stop drinking as well.

SHEEN: Perhaps-- perhaps the freedom of today might lead to that as well.

LAUER: All right. Doctor, I appreciate your information. Charlie, you're going to stick around.
SHEEN: I'll be here.

LAUER: We'll do a little more of this right after this break.