

Nutrition for a Positive Life



A Guide for People Living with HIV/AIDS



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Nutrition Resources

The following is a list of resources that provide additional information about nutrition and HIV.



- **American Dietetic Association** – Search for general nutrition information or find a nutrition professional in your area.
www.eatright.org or 1-800-877-1600
- **American Heart Association** – Information on heart healthy living and diets.
www.americanheart.org or 1-800-242-8721
- **The Body** – According to the American Medical Association, this website was recently named the most frequently visited HIV/AIDS-related site on the internet.
www.thebody.com
- **New Mexico AIDS InfoNet** – Website providing information in English & Spanish on treatment and resources for those with HIV/AIDS.
www.aidsinonet.org
- **Project Angel Heart** – Provides meal assistance to individuals living with HIV/AIDS, cancer and other life-threatening illnesses in the Denver/Colorado Springs area.
www.projectangelheart.org or 303-830-0202
- **Tufts Nutrition & HIV Research** – Website of current research and comprehensive information regarding nutrition and HIV.
www.tufts.edu/med/nutrition-infection/hiv/

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Buyer Beware!

We know that certain supplements can interact with medications, causing unwanted side effects or changes in absorption—but there is still much to learn, and even then these supplements are not always regulated well. The following is a *partial* list of supplements to be cautious with or avoid (If you don't see a supplement you are taking on this list, do not assume it is safe to take):



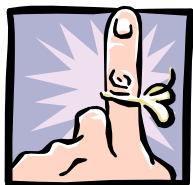
- ✘ **St. John's Wort:** Do not take with ANY protease inhibitor or antidepressant.
- ✘ **Garlic:** May slow blood clotting. Do not take if you are on blood thinners or a protease inhibitor. Fresh garlic is okay.
- ✘ **Echinacea:** Do not use on a long-term basis with HIV/AIDS; only shown to be helpful for short periods in preventing the cold and flu.
- **If you have liver problems (such as Hepatitis C), you should avoid:** Kava-containing supplements, any supplement with extra iron or vitamin A, saw palmetto, comfrey or various prepackaged Chinese herbal remedies.
- **Licorice root:** In excess, may cause low potassium levels, fluid retention, diarrhea, or high blood pressure. Do not take for longer than 4-6 weeks, or if you have diabetes or liver disease.
- **Grapefruit juice:** Do not drink grapefruit juice if you are on a protease inhibitor, it can increase blood levels of the drug to dangerous amounts. Other citrus juices are fine.
- ✘ **Certain supplements may interfere with HAART metabolism.** These include St. John's Wort, garlic, ginseng, melatonin, milk thistle, geniposide and scullcap.



ALWAYS discuss with your health care provider before you start or stop taking ANY medication, herb or dietary supplement. This will help to ensure you have safe and coordinated treatment.

Medications and Supplements

Treatment for HIV may include a combination of medications, vitamins or other supplements. Remember, you also should consider any vitamin or herbal supplement as a drug since its purpose is to achieve a certain result in your body, and since it may cause a number of side effects. Beware of any mega-doses of any vitamin or nutrient.



Remember: No pill, powder or supplement alone can substitute for a healthy lifestyle, which includes good nutrition, regular weight-bearing exercise, and plenty of rest.

A **multivitamin** may help strengthen your immune system, as well as fill in nutritional “gaps.” An additional **calcium** supplement (with vitamin D) may help prevent or slow osteoporosis (bone loss).

A daily **B-complex** vitamin (B-complex 25 or 50) has been shown to slow the progression of HIV to AIDS by helping with immune function and liver and nerve repair. Caution: high doses of B6 may worsen neuropathy.

Vitamin E (400 IU daily) is an antioxidant that can help protect your arteries.

Glutamine, an amino acid that has been shown in some studies to prevent or reduce muscle loss, may enhance immune and intestinal function. Do not take if you have liver or kidney problems.

Pancreatic enzymes may be helpful for the person who has urgent diarrhea shortly after eating, related to their HAART regimen. These are more effective in prescription form and may help your body better digest and absorb food.

Acidophilus can be helpful in reducing antibiotic-induced diarrhea.

Fish, flaxseed or evening primrose oil may help reduce cholesterol, triglycerides and also may help with dry skin.

Positive Nutrition: What difference does it make?

It is important that everyone maintain good nutrition regardless of their situation. However, once a person is diagnosed with HIV, nutrition should be a top priority. Good nutrition can help maintain energy, prevent muscle wasting, and strengthen the immune system. Making good nutritional choices may also improve the response to therapies and medications and reduce negative side effects.

It can be confusing to sort out the best personal diet, nutritional supplement and exercise choices from all of the available book, expert and internet information. Your healthcare team is a resource that can connect you to medical, nutritional, physical and psycho-social resources.



This booklet is provided as a guide to help make the best nutritional choices to keep you healthy and strong.

The Basics

There are basic things to keep in mind when making HIV-related nutrition decisions:

- **Calories:** This is the number one priority. If you do not eat enough calories, you will lose weight and energy. If you eat too many calories, you may gain unnecessary weight.
- **Protein:** Eating good, lean sources of protein will help maintain muscle mass and support immune function.
- **Fluids:** Drinking plenty of non-caffeinated fluids will help prevent dehydration, constipation, and alleviate dry mouth. If there is an infection, diarrhea or vomiting and you are losing extra fluids, you will need to make sure you are drinking enough to compensate for your losses. Drinking colas, teas, coffee or alcohol can cause dehydration.
- **Activity:** An often overlooked part of good nutrition, the right level of exercise will help keep your muscles active and your heart (which is a muscle too!) strong.

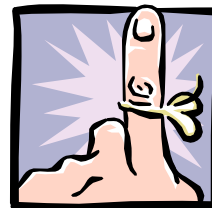


A key factor in staying healthy is giving your body the right fuel. Just as the right fuel and proper care makes a car run smoothly, the right nutrition and care of your body will give you the energy and stamina you need to remain active and strong.



Use this template to fill in several typical days' worth of eating. Use additional pages as needed.

Date/Time	Food/Drink	Meds	Activity	Mood



Remember: Record items as you go along. Don't wait until the end of the day to try and remember exactly what you ate for breakfast! This will help give a more accurate picture of how you are doing.

Food Diary

If you are meeting with a dietitian, it is helpful to bring a food record of at least three days of typical eating. While it may be tedious, it can help determine eating habits, if you are meeting your individual needs, and areas that can change for the better.

When keeping a food diary, remember these tips:

-*Be specific.* The more accurate your record, the more detailed and specific your changes can be. (Write down everything from drinks and snacks to condiments and coffee creamer!).

-*Make a note of what you were doing.* Include time of day, medications, your mood, how you felt (including bowel movements) and your activities. This can help figure out strengths and weaknesses of your routine.

Example:

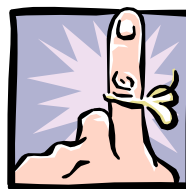
Date/Time	Food/Drink	Meds	Activity	Mood
Wed 11/3 Breakfast 7:30	1c skim milk 1 blueberry bagel 2 Tbsp peanut butter	Kaletra Epivir Truvada Marinol	Getting ready (had diarrhea @ 9am)	Tired
11:45	12 oz. Coke 1oz bag potato chips		Working	Bored
2:00	2 slices wheat bread 1 tsp mayo 3 oz turkey 1 slice cheddar 3/4 c baby carrots 1 cup grape juice		Lunch break, ate quickly	Rushed

Nutrition Challenges with HIV/AIDS

HIV can increase energy requirements, can change the way your body uses components of your food, and can cause decreased absorption of the nutrients you are eating.

Medications can also cause changes in your metabolism or absorption of nutrients. It is important to be aware of possible side effects of the medications your doctor has prescribed, as well as the instructions for taking them with food and other pills.

Malabsorption can be caused by diarrhea, an opportunistic infection, or the effect of HIV on your digestive system. This compromises the ability of your body to absorb nutrients from foods and to maintain your strength. You may find that you have *lactose intolerance* or *fat malabsorption*. These are common problems that can often be managed with changes in your diet.



Remember: Managing HIV can be complex, and nutrition suggestions may seem to disagree with each other. It is important to read this guide thoroughly to determine the best choices for **you** based upon your own tolerance, circumstances and needs.

"He that takes medicine and neglects diet, wastes the skills of the physician." –Chinese proverb

High Impact Diet

It is important to keep in mind the basics of a healthy, balanced diet. Below are some basic guidelines to follow.

- Choose foods that are high in nutritional value such as vegetables, fruits, legumes, and lean protein foods such as chicken or turkey, fish, lean cuts of pork or beef, soy products and low fat dairy.
- Select foods that are “whole grain.” High fiber foods can help lower blood sugar and cholesterol levels; they can also prevent constipation and even certain types of cancer.
- Whether eating three meals a day, or six to eight smaller, more frequent meals, make sure you are choosing a variety of foods with carbohydrate, protein and some fat.
- Limit added sugars, sweets and soft drinks: these contain empty calories and can cause high blood sugar levels, and they do not provide the lasting energy that the body needs.
- Drink plenty of fluids—this can help reduce side effects of medications, as well as relieve constipation and dry mouth.

Food Safety

Remember to practice good food safety, especially with a compromised immune system:

- Always wash hands with soap and warm running water before eating, preparing food, or after handling raw meat.
- Store cold foods below 40°F and hot foods above 140°F to minimize bacterial growth. Thaw foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Cook meats thoroughly (160°F for beef, 180°F for chicken). Do not rely on color to tell if it is done; test the internal temperature with a meat thermometer.
- Refrigerate leftovers promptly, and eat within 2 days.
- If you use a sponge or dishrag, sanitize it regularly. Microwave a non-metallic sponge or rag for 1 minute on high to kill bacteria.
 - When in doubt, throw it out!
- **Never eat raw or undercooked** meat, poultry, seafood or eggs. Do not let raw meats come in contact with fresh, ready-to-eat foods.

Get a Move On!

Regular exercise not only helps you maintain a healthy weight, it also helps keep muscles active, boosts your energy level, and can prevent complications with illness by helping your immune system. Remember to check with your doctor before making major changes to your exercise routine.

Here are a few ideas to help you get out and moving:

- Start with a reasonable goal. If you don't exercise at all now, don't jump into a 90 minute program every day—you'll burn out! Try 30 minutes three days a week, and go from there.
- You should be well-hydrated. As a rule of thumb, drink about 2 cups of water before, 1 cup for every 15 minutes during, and at least 2 cups of water after a workout (more if you sweated a lot).
 - Don't exercise on an empty stomach. Make sure you have at least a light snack before and after. (You're likely to burn muscle, not fat, if you don't have adequate energy before a workout).
- Make sure you include resistance exercise in your routine. This is the best way to increase lean body mass (muscle), which has an important role in immune function. Try 2-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions of push-ups, squats, lunges and sit-ups.
- You don't have to go to the gym to lift weights. Use heavy cans or water bottles to do bicep curls, or walk with light weights fastened around your ankles or wrists.
- There's power in numbers! You are more likely to stick with a fitness plan if you are committing with someone else. Make a regular date with a friend to go for a walk, swim or bike ride.
- Make it meaningful! Pick a 5K with a cause you support and get others to sponsor you, or even better, train with you!
- Join an exercise class at the local gym, YMCA, or Curves (for women). Try a class in martial arts, water aerobics or salsa dancing.
- Park farther away; return the cart to the store. Take the stairs and walk the dog.
 - Consider buying a pedometer. This is a “step counter” that counts the steps you take in a day. Then try adding 2000 more steps to your daily routine.
- If you are unable to get outside, try a local program such as “Sit and Be Fit” on PBS. Check your local listings for show times.
 - Take advantage of exercise DVD's. These can include everything from aerobics and kickboxing to yoga and Pilates.
- Be vigorous with chores! Gardening, vacuuming, and scrubbing floors all burn more calories than watching TV (so does sleeping, for that matter!) So get off the couch and do *something!*

Tips for Weight Loss

Need to shed some pounds? Below are just a few tips to help you get started with weight loss. (This is helpful if you notice you have a new pot belly—the “protease paunch.”)

- Do not think you are going “on a diet.” Rather, try to think of it as **choosing well** and making lifestyle changes.
- **Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full.** This means not skipping meals, including breakfast, because it leads to overeating later in the day.
 - Don’t eat too quickly, but **take your time** and pay attention to your appetite and your body. Sit at the table; do not eat while you watch TV, drive or do other things. This promotes haphazard overeating.
- **Try to eat smaller portion sizes.** Use a smaller plate. When eating out, ask for half portions, or take the rest home as leftovers.



- **Do not eat out of boxes, bags or cartons;** it is easy to eat too much!
- **Increase your physical activity** and make exercise fun. Take up an activity you enjoy, invite a friend, whatever it takes! Make sure you are including resistance exercise or weight training. This will help build muscle, which is more metabolically active than fat.
- **Beware of “diet” foods!** Diet sodas and foods can actually lead to weight gain, as they give people an excuse to overeat other foods. Instead, choose regular foods in moderate portion sizes.
- Think twice before buying into any fad diet or “too good to be true” diet or supplement claim. If there was a cure-all for obesity, everyone would be thin!

There is no substitute for a healthy lifestyle!

Unintentional Weight Loss/Wasting

Metabolic changes with HIV can cause unplanned weight loss. While one or two pounds “here and there” does not sound like a lot, over time this can amount to significant loss that may compromise a person’s overall health.

Weight loss of 5-10% of your original weight over 3-6 months (respectively) can be considered “wasting.” You should let your doctor know, and consult a dietitian if this occurs.

Here are some tips that may help begin to regain lost weight:

- **Take advantage** of times when you have an appetite. It may only last a short while, so keep nutritious foods handy to snack on.
- **Keep a list on the fridge** of high calorie, high protein foods you might like. This may help to take the work out of choosing the next snack or meal.
- **Make eating an enjoyable experience**—put on some music, include your favorite foods, and take your time.
- **Drink fluids in between meals** to avoid getting full too quickly during mealtimes.
- **Grazing is okay!** Eating smaller, more frequent meals won’t fill you up as much, and may be easier than trying to fit all your nutrient needs into “three square meals.”
- Take a **daily multivitamin**. Research has shown that it can improve weight gain in certain populations with HIV, as well as slowing the progression of the disease.
- **Try setting a timer** to remind you to eat every couple of hours.
- **Ask your doctor** if a glutamine supplement is right for you to prevent or combat wasting. (See “Medications and Supplements” on page 16.)

Boosting Calories & Protein

- **Extras count!** Add peanut butter, sour cream, cream cheese, butter, margarine, mayonnaise, sauces, or gravies to foods.
 - **Snack often** on high calorie foods.
- **Fortify your food** by adding powdered nonfat dry milk to anything from milk to sauces, gravies, mashed potatoes, casseroles, cereals and pudding.
- **Add hard-boiled eggs** to chicken or tuna salad, rice, pasta, casseroles, or vegetables.
 - **Eat cottage cheese** with fruit.
- **Prepare canned soups** with milk instead of water.
 - **Stir yogurt** with fresh fruit and granola.
- **Spread peanut or almond butter** on apples, banana, celery, graham crackers, or bread.
- **Try grated cheese or tofu** with salads, pasta, soups, casseroles, burritos and toast.
- **If you are a vegetarian**, you can get protein from sources such as dried beans, peas, nuts, seeds and soy products like soy milk, tofu and edamame. These contain smaller amounts of protein, so you will need to eat more to get the same amounts found in animal protein sources.
- **Nutritional supplements** such as breakfast drink mixes or meal replacement drinks (like Ensure® or Boost®) or Scandishakes® (available through most pharmacies) may provide an easy way to increase calorie and fluid intake.

“He who has health, has hope. And he who has hope, has everything.” –Arabian proverb

Heart Healthy Diet



If you have dyslipidemia or insulin resistance, a heart healthy diet can help lower your cholesterol and keep blood sugars in normal ranges.

- **Limit saturated fats**, including red meat, butter, whole-fat dairy products, fried foods, regular salad dressings, etc. Saturated fat will increase your cholesterol more than anything else in your diet.
- **Increase the fiber** in your diet. This means eating more legumes, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Fiber, particularly soluble fiber, acts like a sponge in helping to rid your body of cholesterol. Read the nutrition facts labels on foods to see how much fiber is in the food and choose the item with more fiber.
- **Use unsaturated fat** when cooking, such as canola and olive oils. These may help lower cholesterol when used in moderation.
- **If you smoke**, quit! Cigarette smokers nearly double their risk of a heart attack and are more likely to have high cholesterol levels when compared to non-smokers. Even if you have been smoking for years, quitting now will still lessen your risks over time. It is the most important thing you can do!
- **Limit alcohol intake**. It can cause heart failure and high triglycerides if you drink too much (more than 1 drink per day for women, or 2 per day for men). Ask your doctor about your intake, as ANY alcohol may interfere with medications you may be taking.
 - **Exercise** at least three times a week.
- If you are overweight, **weight loss** can dramatically lessen your risks of developing heart disease or diabetes. If you have already developed these or other diseases, weight loss can improve your symptoms and response to medications.

Changes in Fat Metabolism

Lipodystrophy: What is it?

- *Lipodystrophy* refers to the changes of fat buildup and loss in your body as a result of HIV. It can also cause metabolic changes such as *insulin resistance* and *dyslipidemia*. Unfortunately, certain anti-retroviral medications can speed up this process.



Dyslipidemia/High Cholesterol or Triglycerides

- *Cholesterol* and *triglycerides* are a measure of the amount of fat in the blood. High cholesterol and/or triglycerides may increase risk of heart disease, and can be a result of diet, medications, and family history.

What *should* my cholesterol be?

You should have your cholesterol checked every 6 months:

- **Total Cholesterol**
 - 120-200 mg/dL (desirable)
 - 200-239 mg/dL (borderline high)
 - ≥240 mg/dL (high)
- **HDL (“good”) Cholesterol** (*higher is better*)
 - ≥60 mg/dL (desirable)
 - <40 mg/dL (high risk)
- **LDL (“bad”) Cholesterol** (*lower is better*)
 - <100 mg/dL (desirable)
 - 100-129 mg/dL (near or above optimal)
 - 130-159 mg/dL (borderline high)
 - 160-189 mg/dL (high)
 - ≥190 mg/dL (very high)
- **Triglycerides**
 - <150 mg/dL (normal)
 - 150-199 mg/dL (borderline high)
 - 200-499 mg/dL (high)
 - ≥500 mg/dL (very high)

Insulin Resistance/ High Blood Sugar

- *Insulin* is the hormone that transports glucose (or blood sugar) from the blood into cells as fuel for energy. *Insulin resistance* happens when insulin is not doing its job, or your cells are not able to absorb the glucose properly. This can result in high blood sugar levels. If you have this, you should also follow the heart-healthy diet, and limit foods high in refined carbohydrates and sugar.

Snack Ideas

Your body needs food **every 3-5 hours for sustained energy throughout the day**. Of course, you should choose foods that are appealing to you, but here is a list to help you get started:

- **Yogurt** mixed with granola
- **Cottage cheese** and 1/2 cup fresh or canned fruit
 - **Whole grain crackers** and cheese
 - **Peanut butter** spread on high fiber bread
 - **Wholegrain bagel** with cream cheese
 - **Trail mix**
 - 1/2 cup nuts or seeds
 - **Lowfat mozzarella** (“string cheese”)
 - **Granola bars** or energy bars
 - **Hard-boiled egg**
- **“Instant” low-salt soup** (such as bean, lentil or split pea)
- **Breakfast burrito**: microwave Egg Beaters® in a bowl; mix in salsa, low fat cheese, and top with avocado slices; wrap in a warm tortilla.
- **Fruit smoothie**: blend together any of the following to your own taste:
 - Yogurt, ice cream, frozen yogurt, or “silken” tofu
 - Fresh, frozen or canned fruit
 - Milk, soy milk or juice
 - Ice (as needed for consistency)
 - To boost the calories, try adding: powdered drink mix, nonfat dry milk, cottage cheese, whey protein powder, peanut butter, 4 oz. half and half, or a commercial supplement.



“Life is not merely to be alive, but to be well.”
Marcus Valerius Martial

Nutrition Side Effects with HIV

Many medications, an opportunistic infection, or HIV itself can cause unwelcome side effects that may impair your nutrition.

Below are some tips to help you deal with the symptoms.

Diarrhea

- Choose a bland diet, limiting spicy foods.
- Stay hydrated by sipping on clear fluids, broths, Gatorade®, Cytomax® or fruit juice (diluted 1:1 with water). Aim for at least 8 cups of fluid per day.
- Try the BRAT diet—Bananas, Rice, Applesauce and Toast or Tea—it is known to slow down diarrhea.
- You can also try congee (rice porridge). To cook, bring 3/4 cup rice and 9 cups water to a boil in a large pot. Reduce to low heat and cover (allowing steam to escape). Cook for one hour, stirring occasionally, until the texture of porridge.
- Include more foods with soluble fiber, such as oatmeal, peeled pears, or winter squash.
 - Eat slowly; aim for smaller, more frequent meals.
- Avoid foods very high in fat or fiber, such as fried foods, raw vegetables, beans and most fresh fruit.
 - Avoid sodas or other sugary drinks.
 - Try eliminating lactose, or use Lactaid® milk.
- If you have urgent diarrhea after eating, ask your doctor if pancreatic enzymes may help (See page 16).
- Diarrhea can cause your body to lose a lot of fluid, and you may become dehydrated very quickly. Check with your doctor if symptoms persist.

Dry Mouth

- Persistent dry mouth can cause dental cavities. Limit excessive sugar, practice good oral hygiene and do not smoke or drink alcohol.
- Drink plenty of thin fluids to keep your mouth moist; also try ice chips, Popsicles® and other moist foods.
- Try adding thin gravies and sauces to foods. Foods that are dry will be harder to chew and swallow.
- Add lemon to water or suck on sugarless candies or chew sugarless gum to stimulate saliva production.
- “Saliva substitutes” are available for severe, persistent dry mouth. Ask your health care provider.

Sore Mouth

- Choose soft, bland foods such as creamed soups, cooked cereal, macaroni and cheese, yogurt, pudding, cottage cheese and casseroles.
 - Puree foods in a blender, or cook until soft.
- Avoid hot foods, which may burn damaged areas.
- Cold foods can be soothing. Try Popsicles®, sorbets, milkshakes or frozen fruit.
- Limit foods that are: citric, acidic, spicy, hard or coarse. Also avoid alcoholic beverages and tobacco, which may slow healing and inflame sores.
 - Drink through a straw to bypass tender areas.
- Rinse your mouth often with a baking soda and salt mouth rinse (1 quart water, 3/4 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda) to enhance healing.
- Even with a sore or dry mouth, it is still important to maintain good dental hygiene. Ask your doctor or dentist for other remedies to help alleviate symptoms.

Nausea/Vomiting

- Try eating foods cold or at room temperatures; hot foods tend to carry an aroma that triggers nausea.
- Sip on cool, clear beverages such as ginger ale, Gatorade®, or lemon-lime soda.
- Eat something small every 1-2 hours. Nausea is more likely to occur on an empty stomach. Try saltines, broths, chips, canned fruit, oatmeal, bananas, rice, toast, a plain baked potato, or gelatin.
- Avoid eating your “favorite foods” during times of nausea; it may be hard to enjoy these foods later.
- Sit up while eating, and try to wait at least two hours after eating before lying down flat.
- You can also try ginger, lemons, or salty, starchy foods that may help ease nausea.
 - Keep a fan on to circulate cooler air.
- If your symptoms do not improve, ask your health care provider about an anti-nausea medication.

