

## HAART on the heart

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Starting Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy can improve some of the things that lead to heart problems but not all of them, a recent study has revealed. Arteries which are already thickened or hardened do not improve on treatment. Metabolic complications, including increases in blood levels of lipids, are common in people on treatment and can also contribute to this condition.

Some [antiretrovirals](#) [1]A medication or other substance which is active against retroviruses such as HIV. are more implicated in cardio problems than others.

Recently, the product information on two HIV drugs has been updated to include warnings relating to possible heart-related side effects.

An increased risk of [heart attack](#) [2]A life-threatening emergency in which the blood supply to the heart is suddenly cut off, causing the heart muscle (myocardium) to die from lack of oxygen. has been linked to the use of abacavir within the previous six months by those with other cardiovascular factors present. People with heart rhythm or any underlying heart problems have been warned off using lopinavir/ ritonavir (Kaletra).

However, atazanavir (Reyataz) and possibly other protease inhibitors have also been linked to an abnormality in heart rate.

Cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack and stroke are becoming increasingly common among people on effective antiretroviral therapy.

Researchers are trying to identify the underlying mechanisms of such diseases in people with HIV.

Meanwhile, we can greatly improve our chances by working with our doctors to ensure we are on the most appropriate treatment regimen and also by exercising regularly, eating well and not smoking.

A new observational study in Sweden has found that eating oily fish, like tuna, once a week seems to protect middle-aged and older men against developing heart failure. But eating it more often than that did not give a greater benefit; in fact, it returned the risk to the same level seen in those who never ate oily fish.

The full article can be found by at <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/702126> [3]

- [abacavir](#)
- [atazanavir](#)
- [heart disease](#)
- [lopinavir](#)
- [ritonavir](#)

### Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/122>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/103>

[3] <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/702126>