

## Healthy T-cells help keep cancers at bay

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Maintaining a CD4 cell count above 500 helps protect you from a range of AIDS-defining and non-AIDS-defining cancers, French investigators report.

Researchers followed over 50,000 positive people between 1998 and 2006 and found that the seven\* most common cancers were found least in those whose counts stayed consistently above 500.

They found that the use of [antiretrovirals](#) [1]A medication or other substance which is active against retroviruses such as HIV. also provided significant protection, reducing the risk of cervical cancer, for example, by 50%.

Current guidelines recommend that treatment should be started when CD4s are in the region of 350 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. These findings support the argument for starting before counts drop below 500.

Investigators also suggest that 'access to cervical cancer screening programmes should be offered to all HIV positive women, and cancer-specific screening programmes, such as for lung cancer and anal cancer, need to be assessed in HIVinfected patients.'

\*The seven most common cancers in [PLHIV](#) [2]Person (or people) Living with HIV. This term is now preferred over the older PLWHA. are Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS), non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Hodgkin's lymphoma, lung cancer, [liver](#) [3]A large organ, located in the upper right abdomen, which assists in digestion by metabolising carbohydrates, fats and proteins, stores vitamins and minerals, produces amino acids, bile and cholesterol, and removes toxins from the blood. cancer, cervical cancer, and anal cancer.

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### Links:

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

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/689>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/102>