

A Checklist for Healthy Ageing with HIV

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This section provides a list/checklist of the sorts of things you might consider when planning for a longer and healthier life with HIV.

Define your health goals now—your aim is optimum health!

You may like to go through this list and tick off the things you feel you have under control and circle the ones you feel you may need to change now, or might have to plan ahead for. You might choose to discuss your health with your GP or HIV doctor if you are unclear, or have any questions.

- Find an experienced and communicative doctor, whom with you feel comfortable.
- Know about HIV treatments and when you should start taking them.
- Follow the recommended dosing instructions if you are taking [ARV](#) [1]A medication or other substance which is active against retroviruses such as HIV. treatments.
- Avoid treatment breaks.
- See your HIV doctor every 3 months to monitor your [viral load](#) [2]A measurement of the quantity of HIV RNA in the blood. Viral load blood test results are expressed as the number of copies (of HIV) per milliliter of blood plasma. and CD4 count.
- If side effects are a problem, don't just put up with them; talk to your doctor about changing treatments, but don't stop treatments.
- Regularly monitor your overall health, this includes:
 - blood pressure, blood lipids, blood glucose, [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. & kidney function tests, and a bone mineral density test, including a DEXA scan if applicable
 - routine annual cardiological assessment—ECG, stress tests or cardiac ultrasound if relevant.
- Understand the significance of the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD). Initiate a discussion about your cardio health and/or risk with your doctor.
- Take steps to change risk factors of CVD, [diabetes](#) [4][Diabetes mellitus] A disorder in which sugars in the diet cannot be metabolised into energy due to a lack of the enzyme insulin. Late-onset diabetes mellitus may be a long-term side effect of some anti-HIV drugs., bone density loss, liver and kidney disease:
 - stop smoking—the first step is to set a date
 - reduce alcohol consumption
 - maintain a healthy weight
 - eat a balanced diet—reduce saturated fats, salts and sugars, increase fibre intake and include calcium in your diet
 - undertake regular physical activity
 - drink 6—8 glasses of water a day.
- Prevention is better than a cure, so consider lifestyle changes now. If you have been diagnosed with any of the following, take active steps to improve your health:
 - low bone mineral density—talk to your doctor about prescribed medications for osteoporosis, calcium and vitamin D supplements, and get plenty of sunshine
 - elevated lipids—discuss with your doctor the pro's and con's of diet and exercise modification and/or taking lipid lowering agents
 - high Blood Pressure—discuss with your doctor diet and exercise modifications vs. antihypertensive medications.
- If you are diagnosed with pre-diabetes or insulin resistance—act NOW. See a dietician and prevent the onset of diabetes.
- Avoid urinary tract infections (UTIs)—avoid constipation, get vaginal infections treated quickly and if you get a UTI treat it quickly.
- Monitor for early signs of dementia—if you are worried ask your doctor for [baseline](#) [5]1. Information gathered at the beginning of a study from which variations found in the study are measured. 2. A known value or quantity with which an unknown is compared when measured or assessed. 3. The initial time point in a clinical

trial, just before a participant starts to receive the experimental treatment which is being tested. At this

reference point, measurable values such as CD4 count are recorded. Safety and efficacy of a drug are often determined by monitoring changes from the baseline values. neurological assessment. Consider starting ARVs before problems arise.

Avoid the risk of cancer—any sudden onset of diarrhoea, anal or vaginal bleeding should be investigated.

Check your breasts and testicles monthly for any unusual lumps or changes in appearance.

Get tested for hepatitis A, B & C—if you're negative then consider hepatitis A & B vaccinations and get appropriate treatment if you have hepatitis C.

Get vaccinated for [pneumonia](#) [6]An inflammation of the lung, usually caused by infection with bacteria or other microorganisms, in which the air sacs of the lung become filled with inflammatory cells which solidify and inhibit breathing. and [flu](#) [7]A highly contagious and relatively common viral infection of the respiratory system, transmitted by infected droplets of moisture which may be spread through coughing and sneezing. Most people with flu recover but some go on to develop secondary infections such as pneumonia which may be fatal. each year.

eSee your dentist every six to twelve months.

Know about therapeutic drug interactions and inform your doctor about all the drugs you are taking.

Know about recreational drug interactions.

Manage social change in your life — get out, explore and enjoy life, make the effort to stay in touch with friends.

Take control of your health and plan ahead.

[◀ Taking Control](#) [8][up](#) [9][Support Services Contact Details](#) ▶ [10]

- [ageing with HIV](#)
- [ANET resources](#)

Links:

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

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/416>

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

[4] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/95>

[5] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/472>

[6] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/351>

[7] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/350>

[8]

<http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/ahead-of-time-a-practical-guide-to-growing-older-with-hiv-/managing-social-change/taking-co>

[9] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/ahead-of-time-a-practical-guide-to-growing-older-with-hiv>

[10]

[http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/ahead-of-time-a-practical-guide-to-growing-older-with-hiv/support-services-cont](http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/ahead-of-time-a-practical-guide-to-growing-older-with-hiv/support-services-contact-details)
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