

Healthy Aging with HIV

Today's HIV Patient

While there is no cure for HIV/AIDS, today's patients with the virus are living longer, and there is a growing number of those aged 50 and older in the U.S. living with HIV. Thanks to improvements in the effectiveness of anti-retroviral therapy (ART), HIV has become more like a chronic disease as treatments have greatly reduced the number of deaths from AIDS in the U.S. At the start of the epidemic more than 30 years ago, people who were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS could expect to live only one to two years after diagnosis. Issues around aging were not a major focus for people with the disease. But now, as of 2015, it is expected that nearly half of HIV/AIDS patients will be over the age of 50.

Tips for Patients

The good news is that HIV/AIDS patients are living longer. However, aging itself can make HIV management more complicated. Management of this chronic disease is imperative to ensure the virus is kept in check and patients can lead fulfilling lives. Patients should talk with their healthcare provider about these and other ways to promote healthy aging with HIV.

Managing Other Medical Conditions/Co-Morbidities

Now that HIV/AIDS patients are living longer, they are experiencing similar problems to other older adults. Older adults with HIV have an average of three other health conditions. Additionally, those with HIV may be more susceptible to conditions like heart disease, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis, kidney problems, lipodystrophy, i.e. accumulation of a hard type of fat around the abdomen area (Hard Belly), or at the back of the neck (Buffalo Hump), and more.

Eating a Well-Balanced Diet

As HIV becomes more of a chronic disease, healthy lifestyle habits are imperative to help manage the condition. Patients should aim to eat a well-balanced diet, including plenty of nutrients, fibers and fluids.

Get Moving

Exercise is important for adults at any age, but especially for those with HIV. It is important for HIV patients to stay active for as long as possible. If they're not able to do activities they used to, patients should talk with their healthcare provider about more simple exercises and stretches.

Talk with the Healthcare provider

Because of the risks of other medical problems for older adults with HIV, it is important for them to be on top of their general health. Seeing an HIV expert is imperative, but patients should be in close communication with their healthcare provider to work through chronic conditions and keep tabs on things like blood pressure, cholesterol and more.

Additional Resources

Older HIV patients may need additional services aside from their treatment. Many resources and services are available online or through a healthcare provider.

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC): HIV Among People Aged 50 and Over
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Care Action: The Graying of HIV
- WebMD: HIV as You Get Older



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