

RESPECT

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FOOD FOR LIFE - A SIMPLE GUIDE TO NUTRITION & HIV

Food for life

People living with HIV can live long and healthy lives. Exercising, eating well, resting and treating any illnesses straightaway means you are taking charge of your health.

Why is good nutrition so important when you are living with HIV & AIDS?

HIV weakens your body's immune system and can make you prone to illnesses. Eating the right food helps you to stay strong for a longer period of time and helps your body to fight sickness when you get ill.

When you are living with HIV you have a constant (chronic) infection in your body and therefore

What is a nutritious diet?

Good nutrition includes a balance of proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals in every meal. No single food contains all the nutrients you need.

1) Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates / starch provide the body with energy. Maize, wheat, millet, sorghum, rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, oats. Try to eat your starch in the morning so that it gives you energy for the day ahead. Eating energy rich foods can help you gain weight.

2) Proteins

Proteins build and repair the body & immune system and help to build muscles. Meat, spinach (marog, umfino, spinafre or amaranth), peanuts, peas, lentils, soya mince, beans, eggs, fish and chicken are examples of proteins.

3) Vitamins & minerals

Vitamins & minerals protect your body from diseases. Vitamins and minerals are found in raw / half cooked vegetables (green leaves, cabbage, pumpkins, rape, tomatoes and carrots) and fruits (peaches, oranges, bananas, apricots,

pears, apples, watermelons etc.)

Is it true that there are some herbs, vitamins & minerals that are particularly important if I am living with HIV?

Yes, because your body needs extra help. There are a number of herbs and vitamins that can help your body stay healthy.

Product	Why?	Where to find it
Selenium	Selenium is an antioxidant. Antioxidants help to protect your cells from being damaged.	Sea fish such as tinned sardines, Pronutro cereal, Aloe leaves, egg yolk.
Zinc	Zinc protects the immune system.	Spinach, peanuts, liver, egg, yolk, meat, chicken, fish, cheese, milk.
Vitamin A / Beta Carotene	Keeps your body strong and helps to fight HIV infection. It is also good for the skin, vision and is an antioxidant.	Carrots, sweet potatoes, mangos, spinach, pumpkin, liver.
Cayenne pepper, chillies and curry	If you raise your body temperature slightly your body can fight HIV better. This is because heat increases your body's ability to fight infections.	Add a ¼ teaspoon of cayenne pepper (or ginger or chillies or curry powder) in a glass of water, milk or fruit juice, stir and drink. Do this three times a day.
Calcium	Calcium helps to maintain your body temperature. It also helps the heart and muscles to function.	Dairy products such as milk and cheese, root vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes) and spinach.
Magnesium	Strengthens the muscles and helps your nervous system to work.	Dark green vegetables, such as spinach, beetroot, cabbage, peas beans, lentils.
Garlic	Is a natural antibiotic and anti-fungal (can kill worms and parasites).	Eaten regularly can help prevent some infections. Garlic is best chopped into pieces and eaten raw (2-3 cloves of garlic should help to prevent some infections).
Ginger	Improves digestion, relieves diarrhoea and stimulates the appetite. Also good for treating colds and nausea.	Use either as a spice or make a tea using freshly grated ginger and boiling water.

I don't have a job. How can I afford a 'balanced diet'?

Eating a balanced diet doesn't have to be expensive. It is about choosing the right foods and right quantities. For instance spinach, beetroot, potatoes and tinned fish are all good foods that are not too expensive. Pick fruit and vegetables that are in season as they tend to be cheaper.

I have HIV and am often nauseous & vomit. What can I do?

You should:

- ✓ Drink lots of cold water.
- ✓ Avoid fatty foods.
- ✓ Eat sour foods such as lemons.
- ✓ Drink fresh lemon juice in lukewarm water.
- ✓ Eat soft foods like rice, sour milk.
- ✓ Sit up when eating or drinking and lie down at least 30 minutes after eating.

I have HIV and often have mouth sores. What can I do?

People infected with HIV often have sores in their mouths. This may be a yeast infection. Therefore, you should stop eating foods that contain either yeast or sugar, like bread, beer, biscuits and cakes for at least three weeks after the symptoms have gone away.

For mouth sores:

- ✓ Chew and swallow peeled garlic every few hours.
- ✓ Eat soft, mashed, smooth and moist food.
- ✓ Eat small meals more frequently.
- ✓ Rinse your mouth with warm salt water or a mixture of baking soda and water.
- ✓ Avoid spicy or acid foods until your mouth feels better.
- ✓ Take plain yoghurt after or before meals.

What can I do to prevent diarrhoea?

Diarrhoea is frequently caused by dirty water or bacteria in food. It is very important that you keep your food preparation area clean and that you handle food safely. You should:

- ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water before and after touching food.
- ✓ Boil all drinking water and store in a clean container with a lid.
- ✓ Wash your cooking utensils, plates and cutlery with hot water and soap before use.
- ✓ Cook all animal products like meat at high temperatures until well done to destroy harmful bacteria.
- ✓ Wash fruits and raw vegetables with water, or peel the skin.
- ✓ Reheat leftover foods at high temperatures before eating them.

- ✓ Cover and store food away from insects, rodents and other animals.
- ✓ Store fresh and leftover foods in a cool place to avoid bacteria from growing on the food. Do not store leftovers for more than 1 day.
- ✓ Do not store raw and cooked food together, use containers to avoid contact between them.

I don't feel like eating and am losing weight. What can I do?

A great tip is to try and eat a little bit of food frequently. Eat things that you enjoy and that are easy to digest. It is important that you keep strong.

It is possible that your stomach is having problems digesting your food. You can try:

- ✓ Pawpaw (fruit, juice, leaves and seeds) is excellent in helping your stomach digest protein (meat).
- ✓ Apples also help to break down food – try eating an apple before your meal.

I am infected with HIV & often have diarrhoea, what should I do?

When you have diarrhoea you lose important minerals. You need to replace these minerals. The best way to do this is by boiling water and adding sugar and salt.

For measurements you can use the following:

You boil 750ml of water (which is the size of large cold drink bottle), let the water cool off and add with 6 teaspoons of sugar and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt. Drink this solution throughout the day, a little at a time.

Also try to:

- ✓ Eat soft, mashed, liquid food like porridge, soup, banana, carrots and squash.
- ✓ Eat small meals: 5 or more meals per day
- ✓ Drink lots of clean water to prevent dehydration.
- ✓ Eat food that is low in fat. Boil, rather than fry food.
- ✓ Avoid milk and milk products (yoghurt, cheese etc).
- ✓ Eat starchy foods that are high in carbohydrates to provide energy.

Do not use hot spices like curry or peri-peri. If diarrhoea persists for more than 48 hours, consult your doctor or health care worker. They may prescribe you medication.