

EATING POSITIVE

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BODY SHAPE CHANGES ~ NUTRITION COMPLICATIONS

With the introduction of HAART (Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy) for the treatment of HIV, new dietary problems are emerging. Nevertheless, a few simple changes which **you** can make can give you back some **control** over any drug side-effects which you may be experiencing.

Some changes may mimic the problems seen in heart disease ~ such as high blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides) ~ and in those people at risk of developing diabetes ~ such as glucose intolerance. **Dietary changes** can help reduce these problems. **Exercise** also plays an important part in helping you control these side-effects.

It is important to weigh up the importance or risk of these problems with any other issues you may be having ~ such as weight loss or diarrhoea. A dietitian can help you with a meal plan or with more specific dietary requirements and advice.

Fats and cholesterol

Elevated levels of blood fats (also known as cholesterol and triglycerides) can be a side-effect of HAART. High blood fats can lead to the build-up of fatty deposits on the inside walls of your blood vessels (arteries), making the space for the blood to move through very narrow ~ this is called **atherosclerosis**.

Your arteries can become blocked if a blood clot gets stuck in a narrowed vessel, stopping the blood and oxygen supply to an area of your body. If the blocked blood vessel supplies your heart, it results in a **heart attack**; if it supplies your brain, it results in a **stroke**.

The types of fats

Cholesterol is a normal and essential part of your body. It is an important part of some hormones and vitamins, and is needed to help with digestion; it also makes up part of cell walls.

Your body is able to make all the cholesterol it needs, so it is **not needed** from the diet.

Triglycerides are a type of fat found in your bloodstream that originate from your food. There are three main types of fatty acids ~

- saturated fats ~ eg butter, cream, meat fat, coconut milk & coconut cream
- mono-unsaturated fats ~ eg olive, canola and avocado oils
- poly-unsaturated fats ~ eg seed and nut oils

High intakes of saturated fats and cholesterol **increase** blood cholesterol levels. However, mono-unsaturated or poly-unsaturated fats can **lower** blood cholesterol levels **if they replace saturated fats in the diet**. Triglycerides levels can be lowered by reducing intake of saturated fats, alcohol and sugar.

Read the “Heart Smart foods” page for a guide to some good food choices for heart health.



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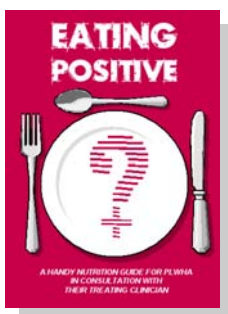


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Fibre in food

A high-fibre diet can have many health benefits ~ and there are even some suggestions that a high-fibre diet may help prevent body shape changes.

Foods that contain fibre are **only plant foods**, including: wheat, oats, rice, grains and bread; fruit and vegetables; nuts, seeds, lentils and legumes.

There are two types of fibre: insoluble and **soluble**.

Soluble fibre eaten in large amounts can help to lower blood cholesterol levels (when part of a modified-fat diet).

Good sources of soluble fibre are: legumes (chickpeas, red kidney beans, cannellini beans, and so on) and oat and barley bran.

Around 25g–30g of fibre should be consumed each day.

Lipodystrophy

This is a term used to describe a number of body shape changes (“fat atrophy” or “fat deposition”) which can occur with the use of some HAART prescriptions. While there is no ‘cure’, some exercise (and dietary) strategies have been shown to help.

Exercise ~ do you get some every day?

Some studies have shown that weight training can help ~

- increase strength
- build muscle tissue
- reduce serum triglycerides.

Aerobic exercise (eg walking, running, cycling, dancing) has been shown to improve ~

- fatigue levels
- abdominal fat levels
- blood glucose levels
- blood fat profile.

As well as these physical improvements, regular exercise can help you feel better about yourself and your body shape.

Excessive cardiovascular exercise may not be beneficial if you are already losing weight ~ see a dietitian or exercise physiologist for more information.

Exercise ~ do you like to do it in the morning or afternoon or ...?

A good tip to getting active is to follow the National Physical Activity Guidelines: these recommend that you ~

- think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience
- be active in as many ways as you can
- put together at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most ~ and preferably all ~ days.

If you can, try to also enjoy some regular vigorous exercise for added health and fitness.

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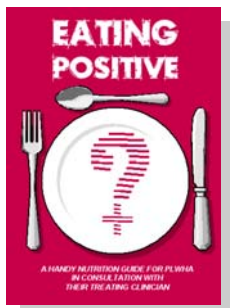


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Impaired glucose tolerance

As well as disrupting the way your body makes and uses fats, HAART may also interfere with the way your body uses **carbohydrates** from your diet. This is called “impaired glucose tolerance”.

There are some **simple**, yet **effective**, changes you can make to your diet to help your body cope with the glucose that comes from the carbohydrate you eat.

Your body needs carbohydrates to work ~ this is the fuel that we all need. It is digested and absorbed as glucose (sugar). A large amount of carbohydrate food at once can be too much for your body to cope with, and your blood glucose levels can rise. Something else to bear in mind is that some carbohydrate foods control blood glucose levels better than others.

Carbohydrates are found in

- breads and cereals
- starchy vegetables (eg potato, corn, sweet potato)
- fruits
- milk and yoghurt
- sweet foods and drinks
- legumes and pulses

Some helpful hints

The simplest way to help control your blood glucose levels is to ~

- eat **regular meals** that are similar in size to each other
- include **even amounts** of carbohydrate at each meal
- **choose unprocessed carbohydrate** foods that are **high in fibre** ~ **like grainy breads and cereals, and fresh fruits** ~ instead of highly-refined carbohydrate foods (white bread, sugary cereals, soft drinks and lollies).

If you are overweight, losing weight will also help control your blood glucose levels ~ click on the links to the **Nutrition matters!** and **A balanced diet** pages for more advice on how to achieve this.

Please see an **Accredited Practising Dietitian** for more specialised dietary guidance and meal planning advice if this is a concern to you.