



POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Health and Wellness Information for Members

Spring 2012



i In this Issue

- Kick the Habit
- Coping with Anxiety
- Glaucoma
- Prevention Points
- Oral Health and HIV
- Know Your Numbers
- Think About Joining a Trial!
- A Message from Your Health Plan
- Language Line Services

Kick the Habit

There are many dangers when people with HIV smoke. It makes your immune system weak and less able to fight infections. Health problems like cancers, heart disease, lung disease, strokes and oral health problems are all linked to smoking.

When you Quit

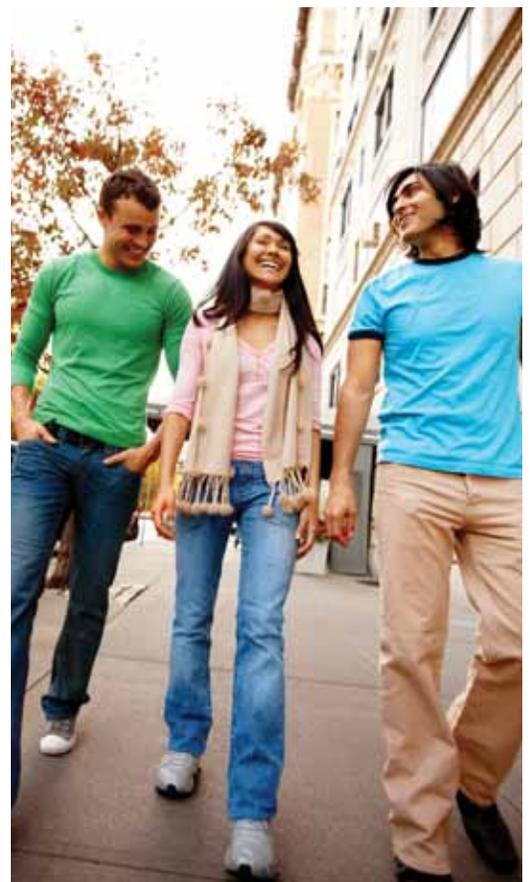
Nicotine is the drug in tobacco that your body craves. You will have nicotine withdrawal symptoms when you quit. These can make you angry, depressed, anxious or moody. These symptoms will go away as the nicotine leaves your system.

Smoking is a habit. Your mind connects it to certain times of day or things you do. You need to re-learn how to do these things without smoking. You should drink lots of water, get plenty of rest and avoid places and things that make you want to smoke. It helps to start a healthy habit like walking or other exercise. This can also prevent weight gain.

Ways to Quit

Half the battle is won when you decide you no longer want to smoke. There are many ways to quit.

- Cold turkey. This is when you stop and never pick it up again.
- Nicotine gum, throat drops or patches give a small dose of nicotine to help control the withdrawal symptoms. You use less and less of them over time.
- Your doctor can prescribe drugs that make you crave tobacco less.
- Support groups can keep you on the right path.



It can be very hard to quit, but you can do it! You will look and feel better. You can live a longer, richer life. If it did not work to quit in the past, you can still try again. Keep trying until tobacco is no longer a part of who you are. Choosing to live a healthy life is the best thing you can do for yourself.

Call the National Smoking Quitline at: (877) 448-7848 or visit www.smokefree.gov to learn more.



P.O. Box 46160
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Member Services
Mon - Fri, 8:00am to 8:00pm
Tel (800) 263-0067
TTY/TDD: 711

Oral Health and HIV

A healthy mouth is a sign of a healthy body. Problems with your teeth, gums, tongue or throat are common with HIV. When you make time to take care of your mouth, it can prevent a lot of problems later.



To help protect your teeth and mouth, you can:

- Brush your teeth after meals with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss gently between teeth.
- Visit a dentist to check and clean your teeth every 6 months.
- See a dentist as soon as you can if you have sores in your mouth.
- **Do not use crystal meth.** This drug destroys your teeth and gums.

Common Problems

There are a few issues that people with HIV have more often. Many limit what you can eat or drink. Some can be very painful.

- Dry mouth is a lack of fluid in your mouth. This can be from HIV or HIV drugs. It can damage your teeth and gums and cause cavities. You can sip water, eat sugar-free candy, or use a rinse to wet your mouth.
- Thrush is caused by a yeast or fungus. There are painful white patches in your mouth, on your tongue, or on your lips.
- A virus can cause cold sores or warts in or around your mouth. Canker sores can be larger and last longer in people with HIV.
- Hairy leukoplakia causes white spots that look hairy. These cannot be wiped away. This happens most in people with low CD4 counts.
- Kaposi sarcoma is a cancer that shows up as dark patches in the mouth.

HIV and Oral Health

When you have sores in your mouth, you are more likely to pick up other germs and infections. Always practice safer sex and use condoms or dental dams for oral sex. You can avoid some dental problems when you take your HIV drugs in the right way every day. Visit a dentist every six months. They may find things you cannot see.

Your Health Plan may not include dental services. Dental schools and HIV/AIDS service groups sometimes have clinics where you only pay what you can afford. Check with your RN Case Manager to see what is offered in your area.

Know Your Numbers

Your **CD4 Count** and **Viral Load** lab test results help you to manage your HIV. These numbers tell you and your doctor how well your body responds to HIV treatment. A blood test every few months helps keep your health on the right track.

CD4 Count measures how many T-Cells are in your blood. The higher your T-Cell count is, the better your immune system works.

Viral Load measures how much HIV is in your blood. The lower your viral load is, the better it is for your health.

Take charge of your health

- See your doctor for a check-up every 3 or 4 months.
- Keep track of your viral load and CD4 count over time.
- Ask for copies of your labs. Your nurse can print older test results.
- Take your HIV drugs every day as prescribed.

Your numbers count

- The goal is to have a high CD4 count that is as high as possible. It should be at least 350. This means your immune system is strong and can fight HIV.
- You want a viral load so low that the test does not pick it up. Less than 20 copies are called an **undetectable viral load**.

Track your CD4 count and viral load online! These websites let you print graphs and see your results over time:

- POZ/ Graph My Labs:
www.aidsmeds.com/graphs/
- The Body:
<https://secure.thebody.com/tracker/intro.html>

Think About Joining a Trial!

New drug trials and treatment studies start all the time. These help develop better treatment for all people with HIV and AIDS. There are many types of clinical trials. One may be perfect for you. Your doctor may ask you to join a clinical trial. Think about it!

For more info call:
(323) 913-1033



Language Line Services

Tell your doctor or RN Case Manager if English is not the language you speak. They can call an interpreter who speaks your language. For your health, it is vital to make sure you and your doctor understand each other. This service is free to you.

A Message from Your Health Plan

Your Contact Information

Positive Healthcare California cares about you and your health. We need to know if you moved or got a new phone number in the past year. Please call Member Services to update your record.

Member Services

Monday-Friday 8:00am-8:00pm
Tel: (800) 263-0067 TTY/TTD: 711

Medication Therapy Management Program (MTMP)

As part of Positive Healthcare California, you are enrolled in the MTMP. This Program helps people who take many prescription drugs. The Program lowers the chance of medication mistakes and reactions. Your health care team will be in touch with you and your doctor. They will explain the drugs that you take. Your doctor will know of safety issues with the medications. Any other health issues will also be handled.

Compliance Hotline

Help us look out for Medi-Cal fraud and abuse. For example, if your Explanation of Benefits lists charges that are wrong, call Member Services. Call our Compliance Hotline if you suspect possible fraud or abuse.

Compliance Hotline: (800) AIDS-HIV • (800) 243-7448

We want to hear from you!

The Client Advisory Committee is a great way to tell us what you think about your Health Plan! We welcome all Positive Healthcare members and AHF Healthcare Center clients. You can share your questions, concerns and comments with our Health Plan leaders. We use your concerns to make the Plan better. Come to the next meeting to find out what Positive Healthcare can do for you!

California - Los Angeles

Tues, March 27, 2012 6:00pm – 7:00pm

Tues, May 29, 2012 6:00pm – 7:00pm

6255 W. Sunset Blvd, 21st Floor

To RSVP, **call Santiago at (800) 243-2101**

Food and drinks will be served.

Questions?

Contact Your RN Case Manager

Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:30pm

Tel: (800) 474-1434

After-Hours Nurse Advice & Urgent Calls

Mon-Fri, 5:30pm-8:30am and 24 hours on Weekends

Tel: (800) 797-1717