



# POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Health and Wellness Information for Members

Fall 2012



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## Aging with HIV

The face of HIV/AIDS is changing over time. Some people diagnosed many years ago are living longer thanks to medications. Others just found out they have HIV. In 2005 more than 24% of people living with HIV/AIDS were over 50 years old and 15% of new HIV diagnoses were people over 50.

### What are the challenges to aging with HIV?

Older people living with HIV/AIDS face extra challenges. You may have watched friends die from AIDS. Or maybe you were just diagnosed and do not know other people who have HIV. There are reasons you need to take special care as you age.

- You may have a lower T-cell count and more advanced disease than a younger person with HIV.
- Your immune system may be tired from fighting HIV.
- You may have side effects if you take ARVs for a long time.
- Your body ages faster than people who do not have HIV.
- You have a higher risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression and some types of cancer.



### What can you do to stay healthy?

There is still a lot you can do to be as healthy as possible.

- Take your HIV medications every day as prescribed.
- Keep appointments with your doctor.
- Get the screening tests that your doctor recommends.
- Manage your other health conditions. This may mean taking medications or eating a certain diet.
- Do not smoke. Tobacco increases your chances of heart disease and many types of cancer.
- Limit alcohol and drug use. Meth and cocaine can cause bone loss, memory problems and premature aging.
- Eat right and stay active.
- Stay connected with friends and your community. Join a club, take a class or go to other community events.

You can live a long and full life when you take care of yourself. Reach out to your health care team if you need help.



P.O. Box 46160  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

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



## Sexual Health and You

Sex should be healthy, fun and safe. It is important for you and your partner to be protected.

### Share Your Status

Talking about HIV lessens the stigma, or negative view, of HIV. Being honest is a good first step to protect yourself and your partners.

- Tell your past sex partners about your HIV status. This can be hard but there are groups that can help. Partners need to know so they can get tested. People are less likely to spread HIV when they know they have the virus.
- Tell any new partners your status. Safer sex will protect you both.

### How can I protect my partner and myself?

- Use condoms every time you have sex. You can help not spread HIV by 80 to 95% if you use latex or plastic condoms the right way, each time you have sex.
- Encourage your partners to get tested.
- Take your medications and keep track of your viral load. You are less likely to infect a partner when your viral load is low or undetectable.
- Use dental dams or flavored condoms for oral sex.
- Have sober sex. Alcohol and drugs increase the chance that you will have unsafe sex.
- Only have sex with one person who only has sex with you. Choose not to have sex. You can reduce your risk of getting or spreading STDs and HIV when you have fewer partners.

### What if my partner also has HIV?

Practice safer sex even if your partner has HIV.

- Your partner might have a different strain or type of HIV than you do. You could get infected again. Another type of HIV might make you sicker. Or you might not respond to medications.
- You still need to be protected from STDs like gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis.

Sources:

The AIDS InfoNet: [www.aidsinfonet.org/fact\\_sheets/view/151](http://www.aidsinfonet.org/fact_sheets/view/151)

CDC: [www.cdc.gov/sexualhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/sexualhealth)



## Access to Care

Positive Healthcare wants you to get the care you need. There are set amounts of time to get the care you need. Positive Healthcare and doctors must follow these standards. If you can, call your doctor or the Nurse Advice Line before you go to the hospital.

If you have questions, call Member Services:

**(800) 263-0067**

If you need help after hours, call the Nurse Advice Line:

**(800) 797-1717**

Type of Care	PHC Appointment Standards
1. Emergency	Go to the ER right away
2. Urgent Care	In 24 hours
3. Primary Care	In one week
4. Specialist	In three weeks
5. Mental Health	In two weeks
6. Other services to test for or treat an illness	In three weeks

## Think About Joining a Trial!

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

**For more info call:  
(323) 913-1033**



## Language Line Services

Tell your doctor or RN Care Manager if English is not the language you speak or if you are deaf or hard-of-hearing. We 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. An action plan with your RN Care Manager will help with any problems you may have. The action plan will know you know just how and when to take your meds.

### **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, September 25, 2012 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Tues, November 27, 2012 6:00pm - 8:00pm

6255 W. Sunset Blvd, 21st Floor

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

***Food and drinks will be served.***

## *Questions?*

### **Contact Your RN Care 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

# POSITIVE OUTLOOK

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## Living Well

Your choices impact your health. When you eat right, you lower your chances of heart attack, stroke and cancer. Exercise and a good diet keep your heart healthy and can give you more energy.

### Eat Right

What does it mean to eat right? It can be hard to make sense of all the tips you hear. These simple steps can help you make better choices about what you eat.

- Eat whole foods. Most meals you cook from scratch will be healthier than fast food or packaged food.
- Eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables each day. These are low in calories. They have lots of vitamins and minerals. Choose a variety of colors and types to get the vitamins you need.
- Use less salt. Taste your food to see if it really needs more salt. Use spices to add flavor without increasing sodium. Rinse and drain canned veggies and beans before you use them.
- Cut down on saturated fats. Avoid trans fats. Eat less fatty meats, whole milk, butter and ice cream. You can find healthy fats in nuts, avocados and olive oil.
- Drink lots of water. HIV medications can affect your kidneys. Water helps reduce side effects.



### Get Active!

Exercise is good for you! It lowers your risk of diabetes, heart attack and stroke. It can also help with stress. When you exercise you:

- Keep a healthy weight or lose weight
- Have more energy
- Strengthen your immune system
- Lower high blood pressure
- Cope with depression and anxiety
- Sleep better

### There are lots of ways to get moving!

- Make a date with a friend. It is easier to stick with it when you have the support of a friend.
- Make a routine. Put it on your calendar. Think of it as something that can't be cancelled.
- Find exercise that you like! It's easier to keep doing something you think is fun. Try dance, yoga, swimming or biking.

Your choices impact your health. Choose to live well!



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## Take 3 Actions to Fight the Flu!

The flu season starts in the fall and ends in the spring. More people get sick at this time of year.

When you have HIV, the flu might make you sicker than other people. If your CD4 (T-Cell) count is low, the flu virus can make you sick for a longer time. The flu can cause pneumonia or death. The good news is that you can protect yourself from the flu.

### 1) Get a Flu Shot Every Year!

This year the shot protects against different types of flu virus than last year.

**Do not get the nasal spray vaccine.** This is also called FluMist. It is not safe for people with HIV.

### 2) Prevent the Spread of Germs

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm.
- Wash your hands often. Use soap and warm water for 20-30 seconds.
- Use alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers if there is no soap.
- Do not touch your face. Flu germs spread when you touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay away from people who are sick.

### 3) Take These Steps if you Get Sick

If you think you have the flu, you should see your doctor right away. They may be able to give you medicine to help stop the flu.

These are some common signs of the flu:

- Headache or body aches
- Chills
- Feel very tired
- Cough or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Fever

Diarrhea and vomiting are rare but can be signs of the flu.

Take care not to get other people sick!

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Stay home when you are sick. Wait until at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.
- Stay away from other people as much as you can.

Protect yourself during flu season. Get a flu shot this fall!

Source:  
CDC [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm)



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# Virus Alert



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## Fight the Bite!

Stay safe from West Nile Virus (WNV)! WNV can cause problems with your brain and even death. People with HIV are at higher risk to get a worse form of WNV. People over 50 are also at a higher risk of getting very sick. Symptoms of West Nile Virus include high fever, headaches, stiff neck, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea, rash or extreme tiredness. If you have these signs, call your doctor right away.

The best way to stay safe is to avoid mosquito bites. Practice the 5 Ds!

1. **DEET:** Use DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. These are approved by the EPA to repel mosquitoes. Read the package instructions to learn how to apply safely.
2. **Dawn and dusk:** Stay inside when mosquitos are most active.
3. **Dress:** Wear long sleeves, pants, and socks if you go out when mosquitoes are most active.
4. **Drain:** Mosquitoes breed in pools of water. Drain flower pots, tires, gutters and buckets. Change water dishes for pets often or keep them indoors.
5. **Doors and windows:** Use screens on doors and windows to keep mosquitoes out. Patch holes and replace broken screens.

Don't take any risks! Protect yourself from mosquitoes and West Nile Virus! Read more here:

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm)
- California West Nile Virus Website: <http://westnile.ca.gov>

## Flu Season Starts Now!

Flu season is starting early! People across the United States are sick with a type of flu called H3N2v. People get this type of flu from contact with sick pigs. It does not usually spread from person to person. Some people get sick after they touch pigs at local fairs. Most people who have gotten sick work with pigs. Take care to protect yourself!

- Stay away from pigs
- Do not visit the pig exhibit at the fair
- Wash your hands often
- Get your flu shot!

If you have questions about how the flu might affect you, talk with your doctor or nurse care manager.