

# HIV/AIDS Guide for Nutrition

## Basic guidelines

- Eat a well balanced diet, including all major food groups
- Aim for 1-1.4 grams (g) of protein/kilogram (kg) to maintain your weight (divide your weight in pounds by 2.2 to calculate your weight in kg)
- Aim for 1.5-2 g protein/kg for weight gain (divide your weight in pounds by 2.2 to calculate your weight in kg)
  - Do not restrict your protein intake unless you have been diagnosed with liver or kidney disease
- Refer to this list for choosing foods that contain protein:
  - Meat
  - Poultry
  - Fish
  - Nuts
  - Beans and legumes
  - Milk and milk products
  - Eggs
  - Tofu
- Try for 35-38 calories/kg body weight/day
- Drink 8-12 cups (C) of fluid/day
- Try to exercise moderately, 3-4 times a week
- Follow your doctor's or dietitian's advice about taking a multivitamin and mineral supplement, and a basic B complex supplement

## Diarrhea and malabsorption

You may need to use medium-chain triglyceride (MCT) oil. This form of fat is easier to digest than other forms. Some studies have shown that taking fish oil at the same time as MCT oil boosts immunity. These tips may help with diarrhea and malabsorption:

- Drink an electrolyte-replacing beverage, such as Gatorade®
- Eat a limited amount of insoluble fiber, found in:
  - Wheat bran
  - Corn bran
  - Whole-grain breads and cereals
  - Cabbage
  - Carrots
  - Brussels sprouts
- Eat an increased amount of soluble fiber, found in:
  - Apples
  - Citrus fruit
  - Oats
  - Barley
  - Legumes
- Ask your doctor or dietitian about fiber supplements
- Follow your doctor's or dietitian's advice about whether to avoid lactose, as you may have developed an intolerance

- Avoid fatty, fried foods
- Avoid caffeine
- Avoid foods that commonly cause gas, such as:
  - Cabbage
  - Broccoli
  - Beans and legumes
  - Potatoes
  - Corn
  - Onions
  - Artichokes
  - Asparagus
  - Soda
  - Milk and dairy foods

### **Constipation**

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Aim to eat 20-35 g/day
- Do light exercise, such as walking, which may help

### **Nausea and vomiting**

- Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day
- Avoid fatty, fried foods
- Try eating foods that are cool or at room temperature
- Avoid lying flat for 30-60 minutes after eating
- Take your medications after your meal
- Drink an electrolyte-replacing beverage, such as Gatorade
- Avoid odorous foods
- Some people report relief from sour-tasting foods and beverages, such as sucking on hard lemon candy
- Consider drinking genuine ginger ale between meals

### **Weight loss, loss of appetite, and fatigue**

- Take appetite stimulants, such as Megace<sup>®</sup> or Marinol<sup>®</sup>, if your doctor prescribes them
- Focus on foods that are nutritionally dense, such as:
  - Cheese
  - Whole milk
  - Eggs and egg yolks
  - Nuts and peanut butter
  - Butter and margarine
  - Cream
  - Dried fruits
  - Honey and jam
  - Gravy
  - Ice cream
  - Eggnog
  - Instant breakfast mixes

- Cream soups
- Consider supplementing your diet with a nutritional supplement, such as Ensure<sup>®</sup>
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco
- Ask your doctor to test you for anemia and to have your lactic acid levels checked
- Consider treatment for anxiety or depression
- Do something relaxing before eating
- Avoid drinking while eating, as you may fill up on liquid before getting to the nutritional part of the meal

### **Oral pain and dry mouth**

- See your doctor regularly
- Brush and floss your teeth often
- Focus on eating soft, moist foods, such as:
  - Applesauce
  - Canned pears and peaches
  - Ice cream and milk shakes
  - Pudding
  - Gelatin
  - Cottage cheese
  - Instant breakfast drinks
  - Eggnog
  - Hard-boiled eggs
  - Yogurt

If you can tolerate warm foods, also try:

- Ground or pureed meat, with gravy or broth
- Mashed potatoes
- Macaroni and cheese
- Cream of Rice<sup>®</sup> or Cream of Wheat<sup>®</sup>
- Mashed vegetables
- Scrambled eggs
- Avoid spicy or salty foods
- Avoid acidic foods, such as oranges or tomatoes
- Avoid any foods with rough edges, such as potato chips or crackers
- Try using fluoride gels and rinses
- Keep sugarless mints, gums, and hard candies on hand
- Follow your doctor advice regarding use of prophylactic antifungal treatment
- Use artificial saliva, which your doctor may prescribe if your mouth is very dry
- Use a straw to drink liquids
- Consider using a numbing mouth spray prior to eating
- Have freezer pops available
- Consider using a humidifier in your home, if your mouth is very dry

### **Change in taste**

- Try other sources of protein if red meat is unpalatable, such as chicken, eggs, fish, peanut butter, etc
- Experiment with herbs, spices, condiments, and marinades

- Rinse your mouth with salt water or ginger ale before eating

### **High triglycerides, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure**

- Use lean meats and skim milk
- Limit foods made with:
  - Partially hydrogenated fat
  - Coconut oil
  - Palm oil
- Limit intake of egg yolks, organ meat, and butter
- Eat fish at least 2 times a week or consider taking fish oil supplements
- Snack on walnuts or almonds
- Limit sodium to 2000 mg/day
- Do not eat foods that contain more than 400 mg of sodium/serving
- Limit cholesterol to 200 mg/day
- Keep total fat intake between 25%-35% of total calories
- Make sure to eat 20-35 g fiber/day
- Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Eat or drink 2-3 servings of low-fat dairy products/day
- Abstain from alcohol
- Choose fresh food and limit processed food, whenever possible
- Limit your intake of concentrated sweets—desserts and sweetened beverages
- Limit intake of caffeinated beverages to 2-3 C/day
- Drink decaffeinated tea—black, green, or white
- Eat more soy-containing foods, if you can
- Talk to your doctor about starting to take a multivitamin and mineral supplement, if you are not doing so already

### **Osteoporosis and osteopenia**

- Eat plenty of foods containing calcium, magnesium, vitamin K, and vitamin D
  - Calcium is found in milk, dairy products, canned salmon with bones, cooked rhubarb, spinach, blackstrap molasses, almonds, oranges, calcium-fortified orange juice, broccoli, and enriched breads and grain products. However, calcium is best absorbed from dairy products.
  - Magnesium is found in seeds, nuts, legumes, and milk.
  - Vitamin K is found in broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, turnip greens, and dark lettuces.  
Note: If you are on Coumadin<sup>®</sup> or another blood thinner, talk to your doctor before increasing your intake of these foods.
  - Vitamin D is found in herring, salmon, milk, milk products, fortified cereal, canned sardines and shrimp, chicken and calf livers, and egg yolks. Vitamin D also is absorbed from sun exposure.
- Use bisphosphonates and/or hormone replacement therapy, if your doctor prescribes them
- Talk to your doctor about taking a calcium supplement, if you can not tolerate calcium-containing foods
- Do weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, whenever possible

### **Glucose intolerance**

- Spread carbohydrate intake over the course of a day; for instance, do not skip breakfast and lunch, and then eat a large amount of carbohydrate at dinner
- Limit intake of concentrated sweets, including sweetened beverages
- Choose whole grains, whenever possible
- Eat 20-35 g of fiber/day
- Aim for moderate exercise, 3-4 times/week

### **Food and water safety**

- Keep foods out of the temperature danger zone—41°-140° F
- Do not allow leftovers to sit out; put them in the refrigerator immediately
- Follow proper hand-washing techniques, using very warm water with plenty of soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, and making sure to clean under fingernails and between fingers
- Wash hands immediately before and after handling raw food
- Throw it out, when in doubt—never eat anything that you think is possibly spoiled
- Purchase food only from reputable sources
- Wash all fresh produce thoroughly, even those that you will remove the skin from, such as bananas, melons, and oranges
- Sanitize the countertop, cutting boards, etc frequently during meal preparation
- Thaw food in the refrigerator or under running water at a temperature lower than 70° F, using the microwave to thaw food only if you are planning to eat the food immediately
- Store raw meat on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator
- Never eat raw eggs or raw fish, such as in some eggnog recipes or sushi
- Cook meat, poultry, and fish to the following recommended temperatures:
  - Poultry: 165° F
  - Ground meat: 155° F
  - Pork, beef, veal, and lamb: 145° F
  - Fish: 145° F
- Do not hold brewed tea at room temperature
- Cool leftover food quickly by transferring it to a shallow pan and/or placing the container into an ice bath
- Reheat leftovers by heating to a minimum temperature of 145° F
- Avoid drinking well water

### **References**

Fenton M, Silverman E. Medical nutrition therapy for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease. In: Mahan LK, Escott-Stump S. *Krause's Food, Nutrition, and Diet Therapy*. 11th ed. Philadelphia, PA: WB Saunders; 2000:1028-1054.

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