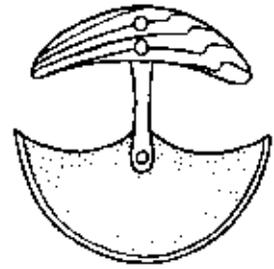


## Information for Inuit Community Members

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### Fact Sheet HIV Wasting Syndrome



## HIV WASTING SYNDROME

### What is HIV Wasting Syndrome?

HIV Wasting Syndrome is when a person with HIV suddenly loses a lot of weight without meaning to. Wasting is very common in people with HIV and can be dangerous and leave the person at risk to other illness.

### Is there a difference in Wasting Syndrome between men and women?

**Yes.** Women with HIV wasting tend to lose more of their body fat, while men tend to lose more of their muscle.

### What are the signs of wasting?

The signs of wasting are weight loss, loss of fat and muscle (mostly on the sides of your head), diarrhea, fever, malnutrition, depression, poor appetite and weakness.

### How do I tell if I have wasting?

Your doctor will likely diagnosis you with Wasting Syndrome if you have HIV and have lost more than ten percent of your body weight. Wasting is different from normal weight loss. It is harder to get back the weight. There is a common medical procedure that can measure your lean body mass to tell if you are wasting. Your doctor can then find out what treatment you should be given.

### What causes wasting?

HIV Wasting Syndrome occurs in people with HIV. It is often caused by loss of appetite and HIV medication side effects which include vomiting, and changes in your tastes.

The small intestines of people with HIV are at risk to infections that cause diarrhea. Your body needs more energy to fight HIV, but when you can't eat, your body uses your muscle and fat to give your immune system energy.

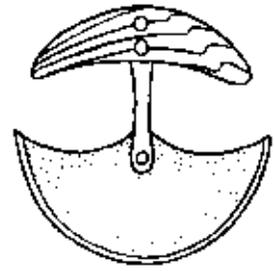
A low testosterone level can also cause wasting in men with HIV.



## Information for Inuit Community Members

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### Fact Sheet 3 HIV/AIDS -Related Illnesses



#### Can wasting be prevented?

Wasting cannot be prevented however there are some things you can do to help. Ask your doctor or nurse about starting a meal program even if you show no signs of wasting. Vitamins and minerals, appetite stimulants and eating healthy can help prevent HIV wasting syndrome. Men can ask their doctor to check testosterone levels. Raising testosterone levels can help protect men from opportunistic infections and it can also help maintain body weight. In some cases, physical exercise can also help to prevent wasting.

#### How do you treat wasting?

- To help you eat more, your doctor will give you medication that will help you eat and help you stop vomiting.
- Your doctor may also give you medicine to fight infections in your small intestine and stop diarrhea.
- Talk to your doctor about starting an exercise training program.
- If you lose too much weight your doctor may recommend a feeding tube (also called a PEG). This will help increase your body weight and nutrient intake. This kind of treatment is for the worst wasting.

