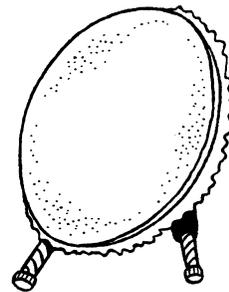


Information for Inuit Community Members

Fact Sheet 4 Nutrition and HIV



WHAT IS GOOD NUTRITION?

Good nutrition means giving your body the foods (nutrients) it needs in order to stay healthy and keep working at its best without gaining or losing too much weight.

Why is nutrition important for people living with HIV?

Good nutrition can be difficult for many people with HIV. When your body is fighting an infection, it uses more energy and you need to eat more than you normally would. However, when you feel sick, sometimes you don't feel like eating.

Some medications can cause sour stomach, and some HIV-related infections can affect the mouth or throat, making it difficult to eat. Also, some medications and infections cause diarrhea. If you have diarrhea, your body is actually using less of what you eat.

When you lose weight, you are losing either fat or lean body weight (muscle). If you lose too much lean weight, your body chemistry changes. This condition is called wasting syndrome or cachexia. Wasting can kill you. If you lose more than 5% of your body weight, it could be a sign of wasting. For example, if you weigh a hundred and fifty pounds and suddenly lose seven pounds or more, you should talk to your doctor.

Nutrition guidelines for people with HIV

First, eat more healthy foods and foods that are good for you to help you build muscle. Extra muscle weight will help you fight HIV. This is very important. Many people want to lose weight, but for people with HIV, it can be dangerous to lose weight.

Make sure that you eat plenty of protein and carbohydrates (starches) with moderate amounts of fat.

Protein helps build and maintain your muscles. Meats, fish, beans, nuts and seeds are good sources of protein.

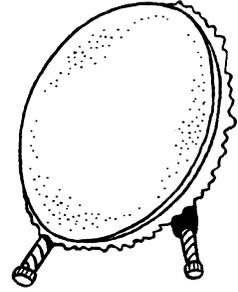
Carbohydrates give you energy. **Complex carbohydrates** come from grains, cereals, vegetables, and fruits such as bananas. They are a long-term (time release) energy source and are a good source of needed fibre and nutrients. **Simple carbohydrates**, or sugars, give you quick energy. You can get sugars in fresh or dried fruit, honey, jam or syrups.

Fat gives you extra energy. You need some -- but not too much. The "monounsaturated" fats in nuts, seeds, canola and olive oils and fish are considered "good" fats. The "saturated" fats in butter and animal products are "bad" fats.



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A moderate **exercise** program will help your body turn your food into muscle. These can be as simple as taking a walk or bicycle ride everyday, working out at a gym or playing your favourite sport. If you do try a new activity, remember to take it easy at first and slowly work exercise into your daily routine.

What are nutritional supplements?

The food you eat contains many nutrients including vitamins and minerals. Sometimes you need more vitamins and minerals than you get from your food. **Nutritional supplements** are vitamins and minerals in pill and other forms. Many people who are HIV positive take supplements, such as a daily **multi-vitamin** or a **protein "whey" powder** to increase muscle mass and make them healthier. If you feel you need to use nutritional supplements be sure to get some advice from your doctor first.

What about liquids?

Drinking enough liquids is very important when you have HIV. Extra water can reduce the side effects of medications such as dry mouth and constipation. Remember that drinking tea, coffee, colas, chocolate or alcohol can actually make your body lose liquid.

What about traditional Inuit foods?

Traditional Inuit foods such as muktaaq, Arctic char and seal don't have artificial additives, therefore they are very good for you. In addition, they are low in fat and great sources of energy, vitamins and minerals.

What about food safety?

Keeping food free from germs and bacteria is important for everyone, but especially important for those living with HIV. Practice food safety. Keep your kitchen clean, wash foods and be very careful about food preparation and storage. If your tap water isn't pure, drink bottled water.

