

# APICHA's NAVIGATOR GUIDE

## CREDITS

*Many thanks to all the people who have contributed to Asian Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV and AIDS' (APICHA) "Navigator Guide" through volunteered information and advice. The following have worked on specific parts of the book:*

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*The mission of APICHA is to combat AIDS-related discrimination and to support, empower, and enhance the quality of life of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the New York City area – particularly community members living with AIDS and HIV infection – through client services, education, training and technical assistance, community organizing coalition-building policy analysis, and research.*

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The information in this guide is intended to be used as reference and resource information only. APICHA makes no warranty of the organizations listed. Please see your case manager or legal or health expert for the most current and complete information.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

For almost two decades, the AIDS epidemic has changed many of our lives. Being diagnosed with HIV or AIDS can evoke many feelings such as anxiety, depression and loneliness. However we now know that HIV can be treated early and adequately and can become a manageable chronic illness.

Life with HIV or AIDS has many special considerations. You need to make important decisions on your medical treatment, nutrition, exercise, legal, and financial issues. It can be difficult to understand all the different services and options available to you. We hope that this guide will help answer some of your questions about living with HIV or AIDS.

This guide is organized into three main parts: Medical Guide, Self-Care Guide, and Financial Guide. At the end, there is a glossary of terms, resources listing, and worksheets for you to use.

The Medical Guide answers questions about HIV infection, medications and treatment, and opportunistic infections. The Self-Care Guide answers questions about nutrition, hygiene, and exercise. The Financial Guide answers questions about entitlements and benefits that can help you pay for your medications, doctors' bills, rent and food. All the topics are listed in the Contents section. The glossary contains some HIV-related words used in this guide. The resources list includes organizations that you can get in contact with if you have questions or would like assistance. Your case manager can help you set up nutrition and exercise plans with the worksheets, and you can keep track of your viral loads and CD4 counts on the wallet-sized card.

It is important that you get in contact with a case manager, such as at APICHA, who can make the proper referrals. This guide is intended only to inform you of your options. Your case manager can help you make the best decisions and find the services you need, from HIV-knowledgeable doctors and yoga classes to assistance regarding immigration.

We hope that this guide gives you a better idea of the services that can keep your life active and full. You can always contact us at 212-620-7287 or 718-457-9662 if you have any questions.

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## NAVIGATOR MEDICAL GUIDE

### WHAT DOES AN HIV POSITIVE TEST MEAN?

It means that your blood test showed that you have the **human immunodeficiency virus**, or HIV. HIV is the virus that causes **acquired immune deficiency syndrome**, or AIDS. Just because you have the virus does not necessarily mean you have AIDS.

HIV attacks the immune system of the body. The immune system helps defend the body against infections and certain forms of cancer. Over a period of time, the virus overwhelms the immune system. The body is not able to successfully defend itself from opportunistic infections. Developing opportunistic infections or cancer because you are HIV positive is a condition called AIDS.

The length of time from when you are infected with HIV to the development of AIDS is different from person to person. You can remain healthy any time from a few years to more than ten years before developing any symptoms.

Since HIV is an infection, you can pass on the virus to other people primarily through unprotected sex and by sharing needles used to take drugs. Pregnant women can also pass on the virus to their babies before and during delivery.

It is important that you understand the disease itself and what is available to you so you can stay as healthy as possible, for as long as possible. Taking effective medications against HIV can keep you healthy longer. You can also take medications that will help you prevent some of the illnesses caused by HIV.

It is most important to get care as early as possible before more serious problems arise. There are many agencies that can help you get good care. Community organizations listed in the Resources section such as APICHA, GMHC, Body Positive, etc., can help you get medical care. These organizations can also help answer questions that you may have regarding HIV, social issues and laws affecting people infected with HIV.

## WHAT ARE HIV VIRAL LOADS AND CD4 COUNTS?

The **HIV viral load** and the **CD4 count** blood tests are used to determine what stage of the HIV process you are in. A combined interpretation of these tests is useful not only to mark the stage of HIV disease but also to check how your anti - HIV medications are working.

### Reading Viral Load Tests

The HIV viral load test measures the amount of virus you have in the blood. It is the number of HIV copies per milliliter (1/5 of a teaspoon) of blood. There are two commonly used tests to measure the HIV viral load. One is called the quantitative PCR and the other, branched chain DNA (b-dNA). It is best that measurement of the viral load be done and compared over time using only one of the two tests. Most tests can read as little as 400 HIV copies/ml. The virus is said to be “undetectable” if the amount is below 400 copies/ml. This does not mean that there is no virus present- it means that the test cannot measure the amount of virus below 400 copies/ml.

It is also important to understand logarithmic changes. When you get your first viral load measure, this is considered your *baseline* viral load. You can use this number to compare to later viral load measurements. Your medication plan will depend on your baseline viral load.

The changes in your viral load can show how well your medication is working. These changes are in logarithmic form (log). The table is an example of logarithmic changes:

Log drop	Viral Load in copies per milliliter
1.0	100,000
2.0	10,000
3.0	1000
4.0	100

\* Baseline value of 1,000,000 copies/ml

For example, if your baseline viral load was 1,000,000 copies/ml, you decide to take combination anti - HIV medications. After a month of taking these medications, you go back to the medical specialist and you get another viral load measure. The results come back and your viral load is now 1,000 copies/ml. This means that the amount of virus in your blood dropped by 3.0 logs- there are now fewer copies of the HIV virus in your blood, and your medications are probably working.

### Reading CD4 Counts

The CD4 count shows how your immune system is doing. CD4 cells are a type of white blood cell used by the immune system to fight infection. These are also the cells that the HIV attacks. HIV attaches to the CD4 cells, taking over the cell so it can reproduce new HIV particles. The new HIV particles in turn attach to other uninfected CD4 cells making more copies of the HIV. In the process, the CD4 cells are killed. Your body replaces them with new CD4 cells. After several weeks, the CD4 cell and the viral replication reach a balance. This is called the viral *set point*. If you are at this point in the disease process, you may be completely healthy.

The immune system eventually becomes overwhelmed by the number of HIV particles. More CD4 cells are killed than what the body can replace. Measurements of both the viral load and CD4 cell count at this point will show a high viral load and a smaller CD4 cell count. As your CD4 cell count falls to low levels, you may start to show signs and symptoms of HIV progression, such as the development of opportunistic infections, and eventually AIDS. A combination of medicines against HIV can slow down the damage caused by the virus on the immune system.

Stages by CD4 cell count and viral load:

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Early</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
<b>CD4 Count</b>	CD4 > 500	CD4 350-499	CD4 < 350
<b>Viral Load</b>	vRNA < 5,000	vRNA: 5,000- 100,000	vRNA: >100,000
<b>HIV Stage</b>	No Symptoms	Some compromise to the immune system	Severe compromise to the immune system; AIDS develops

## WHAT ARE THE HIV/AIDS RELATED MEDICATIONS?

Medications used for HIV/AIDS can be divided into two general categories. **Antiretroviral medications** are drugs used to stop the growth of the virus. **Prophylactic medications** are used to prevent illnesses related to HIV.

### Antiretroviral medications

The goal of combination antiretroviral therapy is to keep the number of the virus down so it attacks less CD4 cells. You should understand the complexities involved in starting such a therapy. You should think about what taking these medications means to you, dose scheduling, side effects of the medications, and taste and size of the pills. All these medications are powerful, but they may not work for everyone. How well the medication works depends on if you take the drugs on time, how well your body is able to absorb these medications, and your history of past antiretroviral therapy. Taking the medicine correctly and *consistently* can be of great benefit to you. *Remember that you should always see your HIV specialist doctor and discuss treatment before taking or stopping any medication.*

New drugs and treatments are being developed all the time. You can get updates on HIV treatment on the National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Program web-site at <[www.natap.org](http://www.natap.org)>.

There are three main types of antiretroviral therapy. They are grouped by where in the HIV life cycle they work. The 3 types currently available are:

- **Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor (NRTI's)**

NRTI's work in the first stage when HIV reproduces itself. During this stage, HIV uses an *enzyme* called reverse transcriptase. NRTI's block this enzyme. There are currently 6 medications available:

1. Zidovudine (AZT/ Retrovir) – It might cause stomach pains, *anemia* (low red blood cell count), kidney problems, headache, low white cell count.
2. Didanosine (ddI/ Videx) – It might cause inflammation of the pancreas, called *pancreatitis*. The pancreas is an organ that produces substances to help in digesting food. When it becomes inflamed, you experience stomach pains, nausea and vomiting. It might also cause tingling of the hands and feet, called *peripheral neuropathy*.
3. Stavudine (d4T/ Zerit) – It might cause peripheral neuropathy, pancreatitis.
4. Zalcitabine (ddC/ Hivid) – It might cause peripheral neuropathy, pancreatitis, and oral ulcers.
5. Lamivudine (3TC/ Epivir) – It might cause kidney problems, anemia, and low white cell count.
6. Abacavir (1592U89/ Ziagen) – This is the newest member of this group. It might cause a fever with or without rash. When this occurs, the drug needs to be stopped immediately. Continuing the medication could cause death.

- **Non-nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor (NNRTI's)**

NNRTI's work by blocking the same stage as the NRTI's. A rash is the most common side effect in this group of medication. There are currently 3 medications available:

1. Delavirdine (Rescriptor)
2. Nevirapine (Viramune)
3. Efavirenz (Sustiva)- Aside from the rash, it might also cause some central nervous system effects such as dizziness, insomnia, vivid dreams and feeling "spaced out."

- **Protease Inhibitors (PI's)**

Protease inhibitors work in the later stages of HIV reproduction. They block the enzyme called protease. They might produce bloating, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and rash. They have also been known to cause diabetes, or uncontrolled blood sugar. These drugs are processed through the liver and might cause liver problems when used with other medications. If you are taking protease inhibitors, you should talk to your doctor about any new medications you are taking that might not work well with the PI's. There are currently 4 medications available:

1. Indinavir (Crixivan) - Kidney stones may develop if the patient does not drink enough fluids.
2. Nelfinavir (Viracept) – It might cause diarrhea. Antidiarrheal pills may have to be taken with this drug.
3. Ritonavir (Norvir) – both liquid form and gel capsules are available
4. Saquinavir (Invirase/ Fortovase)

### **Prophylactic medications**

Prophylactic medications will help prevent opportunistic infections when the immune system becomes weak. Please see the next section on opportunistic infections.

The critical stage is when the CD4 count drops to below 200. During this time, PCP, an infection of the lungs, is likely to occur. A medication called Bactrim (also called Septra) will prevent PCP if taken at least three times a week.

When the CD4 count drops to below 100, you have a greater chance of getting other infections such as CMV, an eye infection, MAC, a blood infection, and tuberculosis (TB). Medications can decrease the chances of getting active infections if taken early. You should get regular eye exams and blood tests.

You should also get tested and vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B. Each year in the fall, you should get a flu shot. If you're a woman, don't forget to see your gynecologist for pap smears at least twice a year.

HIV medication treatment might be sometimes difficult and complicated. However, the combination of antiretroviral therapy and prophylactic medications can make your life longer and more comfortable.

## **WHAT ARE OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTIONS?**

Opportunistic infections, OI's, are infections that can occur when you have a weak immune system. It is most important to have regular check-ups with a health care provider to identify problems early. Always ask your doctor or health care provider if you have any questions regarding your symptoms or medications.

### **PCP**

PCP, **P**neumocystis **C**arinii **P**neumonia, is an infection of the lung. Some people call it AIDS pneumonia because it occurs mostly in people with AIDS. PCP is a serious illness. If not treated immediately, it might cause death. People who get this infection usually have a CD4 count of less than 200.

Signs and symptoms of PCP include dry cough for several days or even weeks, fever, chest pain and difficulty breathing. These can also be signs of other illnesses, so it is best to see a doctor or other health care provider immediately.

PCP can be prevented. Once your CD4 count has dropped below 200, you need to take certain medications:

1. Bactrim (also called Septra) is a medication used against bacteria; it comes in a liquid or pill form.
2. Dapsone is used for patients with allergy to Bactrim. It also comes in a pill form.
3. Mepron comes in liquid form.
4. Pentamidine is an inhalation therapy used once a month.

For reasons that are unclear, many Asians and Pacific Islander descendants have allergic reactions to Bactrim (itchy skin and red rashes). Please note that even though you have an initial allergic reaction to Bactrim, Bactrim is still the most potent medicine against PCP right now. You can ask your doctor if you can take fewer pills at the beginning of treatment and then increase your dose. This way you might not develop the allergic reactions and allow your body to gradually adjust to taking Bactrim.

### **TB**

TB, tuberculosis, is an infection that primarily affects the lungs but may also affect the liver and the brain. A person who has active infection in the lungs can spread TB through coughing or sneezing. A casual exposure, such as one time in the subway or in the street, is not enough to infect anybody. You must have close contact- living in the same house or working nearby- to become infected with TB. People who are HIV positive have a higher chance of developing active TB.

If you are HIV positive, you should get tested for the TB every year with a skin test called PPD. The PPD test is done by injecting a small amount of test liquid under the skin on your arm. After two to three days, it is checked to see if there is a significant bump in the area where the liquid was placed. If you get a significant bump, you were exposed to the TB bacteria.

The symptoms of TB are cough, fever, night sweats, weight loss, chest pain and sometimes coughing up blood. People with active TB may have all or only some of these symptoms. Early PPD tests and treatment are important to prevent more serious complications and further spread of the TB bacteria to other parts of the body.

Treatment directed against TB has two parts: one is treatment given to exposed individuals to prevent them from getting active infection and another one is treatment for those individuals who have active infection. If you have TB, it is important to get medication treatment to prevent active TB. There are many drugs available for the treatment of active TB. Usually, three or four TB medications are first used. It is not difficult to treat TB if the medications are taken correctly. Most people stay in the hospital at first. This is to prevent them from spreading the TB germ to other people. Once their infection is under control and on therapy, they go back home and continue their treatment there. One of the difficulties in TB therapy is that medications have to be taken for several months to ensure that it does not recur.

In New York State, DOT (directly observed therapy) is offered as a way of making sure patients stay on their therapy. Under DOT, you go to a clinic every day and receives all of your medications.

## **MAC Infection**

MAC infection is an infection of the blood caused by bacteria called *mycobacterium avium*. It is not as contagious as TB. MAC primarily affects HIV positive patients with CD4 counts less than 100. MAC is present all around us: in the water, soil and air. Only people with weakened immune systems get sick from MAC infection.

Symptoms of MAC infection include fever, weight loss, night sweats, tiredness, diarrhea. Because it is an infection of the blood, it can spread to the different organs of the body like the liver, spleen, and bone marrow, small and large intestines.

Therapy is directed towards two main goals: prevention of infection and treatment of active infection. Clarithromycin and Azithromycin are used to prevent active infection. They are combined with other antibiotics when used to treat active infection. Keeping the immune system as healthy as possible by the use of effective anti-HIV medications is also important.

## **HOW IS HIV PASSED ON FROM A PREGNANT WOMAN TO HER BABY?**

If you are an HIV positive pregnant woman, you can pass on the virus to your child before and during delivery. Because the virus is in your blood, you can easily pass this on to the child you are carrying. During delivery, more blood is exchanged between the mother and child. New York State has recently passed a law requiring all pregnant women to be tested for HIV.

You can decrease the risk of transmission of HIV to a baby with AZT and other medications. A July 1999 study by the National Institutes of Health showed that mothers who took the drug Nevirapine once during labor with their babies taking a dose 3 days later significantly reduced the chance for the baby getting HIV. Not all drugs have been tested for use with pregnancy, however. Be aware that Efavirenz [Sustiva] will cause major birth defects if taken early in the pregnancy.

This medication only decreases the risk. Absolute prevention of transmission cannot be totally guaranteed.

## NAVIGATOR SELF-CARE GUIDE

### HOW CAN I KEEP MYSELF HEALTHY?

Many people living with HIV/AIDS stay healthy by seeking healing methods outside the doctor's office.

Most doctors' basic strategy to manage HIV is to eliminate the HIV virus through combination therapies and HAART. Your doctor will be analyzing your viral load and CD 4 levels and providing treatment against opportunistic infections. What can you do for your health besides taking your medication and visiting your doctor?

This section will focus on nutrition and exercise and will provide information on steps that you can take to keep yourself healthy. Many of these methods are based on HIV-positive people's experiences and will also include ideas based on Traditional Chinese Medical (TCM) theory. According to TCM theory, illness is a result of an imbalance or disharmony of one's organ systems. This imbalance is due to a combination of lifestyle, poor habits, negative external influences - such as stress, poor diet, and exposure to toxins.

Turning to the Chinese model of health maintenance can be very helpful. For example, what we eat directly affects our health. A weak digestive system, which often results from a poor diet and/or emotional factors, can cause other organ system disharmonies. Exercise is important because it aids the body to circulate its blood and *qi*. *Qi* is "vital energy" and is responsible for maintaining the balance and functioning of all the organ systems. In order to function properly, the body requires a free and smooth flow of *qi*. Factors such as stress, anger, and depression, and a heavy burden on the liver from strong medications can stop the smooth flow of *qi*. This makes our ability to cope with stress and negative emotions and to detoxify our bodies more difficult.

## HOW CAN I EAT NUTRITIOUSLY?

Our bodies depend on the right balance of food to stay healthy. People with HIV have the added burden of being host to an aggressive virus. When HIV infects your cells, your body fights back by destroying the virus and making new healthy cells. As your body makes new cells, it uses nutrients that you get from the food you eat. HIV medications also put demands on your body and require that you eat certain foods to stay healthy.

It is not always easy to feed ourselves with the right kinds of food. When we're feeling tired, who wants to cook? Who has the time or energy? It helps to know some of the recommended foods and vitamins. It is also helpful to ask your case manager about services that can provide you with free food services.

Standard nutritional advice often stresses getting a certain number of fruits, vegetables, starch, and protein sources a day. Although quantity is very important, the quality of the food and how the food is prepared is just as important. Please see the sections below for information on

- General Tips
- Food Groups
- Recommended Diet
- Nutritional Supplements
- New Concerns in Diets
- Food Safety

## WHAT ARE SOME GENERAL TIPS I CAN FOLLOW?

- *Eat regularly*

Create a regular eating schedule whether you eat several small meals a day or a few large meals. Your digestive system functions better if used regularly. This also helps maintain your blood sugar and energy levels. If you're at risk of *diabetes*, regular food intake is particularly important.

- *Eat breakfast*

This will ensure that your body has the fuel it needs to get it through the first part of your day. Eating at the beginning of the day is important to start your digestive system and ensure digestive health.

- *Eat a wide variety of foods*

This way you have a better chance at getting the range of vitamins, minerals and nutrients that your body requires. College students in East Asia have died of malnutrition from living on a diet consisting only of ramen.

- *Eat fresh foods*

For example, you will get more nutritionally out of fresh cooked spinach than you can if it is frozen or canned. Processing foods takes out their nutrients. Avoid overly processed foods, including fried foods, and pre-prepared foods.

- *Keep your food “temperatures” balanced*

Don't eat overly spicy or fried foods. In Chinese medicine, these are “hot” foods. It is best to avoid chili peppers and fried or spicy foods. Alcohol is also a hot food. Many fruits, fruit juices and raw salads are considered “cold” in nature. Sugar and milk are also cold foods. Too much cold foods can burden your digestive system. Cooked vegetables, however, are very balanced, neither too hot or too cold and are a very important source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. It is best to eat a variety of foods and not too many hot or cold foods at one sitting.

- *Stay away from caffeine (colas, coffee, tea, chocolate)*

Green tea is a healthier form of caffeine which is believed to have good cleansing properties. Caffeine has been associated with increased cholesterol, decreased nutrient assimilation, depression, anxiety, and pre menstrual syndrome.

- *If something makes you feel sick, don't eat it, even if it is supposed to be good for you.*

- *Drink plenty of fluids, mostly filtered or purified water*

Fruit and/or vegetable juices and herbal teas are good. Avoid sugared drinks and drinks containing caffeine. The standard recommendation is 8 glasses of liquid per day. If you tend to be thirsty, have a dry mouth, are taking a lot of medications, have diarrhea, tend to sweat a lot, or exercise, you should drink more than 8 glasses per day.

- *Try not to rush through your meal*

It is important to relax while eating and to chew all of your food. Eating with other people can help slow you down while eating. It can also make your meal more enjoyable.

- *Take daily supplements (see Supplements section below)*

- *It is better to eat something than nothing*

However, you should keep in mind that eating junk food, fried greasy fast foods, and other overly processed foods do not contribute to your body's nutritional needs.

- *Keep your food safe and clean. (see Food Safety Section below)*

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN FOOD GROUPS?

**Carbohydrates** are the easiest form of food for the body to process into energy. Simple carbohydrates are basically the different kinds of sugars. Complex carbohydrates are starches such as rice, grains, starchy vegetables like potatoes. Avoid eating simple carbohydrates which do not have the vitamins, minerals and fibers that complex carbohydrates have. Too much simple carbohydrates in your body will be changed into fats. It can also damage your body's blood sugar levels.

**Protein** is the basic building block of many of the body's structures. People with HIV require plenty of protein to prevent muscle wasting and to make up for the destruction from HIV infection. Good sources of protein are legumes/beans, bean products such as tofu, meat and fish.

**Fruits and vegetables** are an essential source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They provide vitamins C and E which protect your body from the aging process and many degenerative diseases. Fiber in your diet is important for the health of your intestines. A high fiber diet will keep your intestinal tract clean and will also clear out toxins and wastes that sit in the intestinal tract.

**Fats** are also an essential component of our diet, but not all fats are good for us.

*Saturated fats* are taken from animals: whole milk, butter, cheese, meats. They raise cholesterol levels and are associated with heart disease and certain cancers.

*Trans fats* have been chemically altered. They include margarine, vegetable shortening and fats labeled “hydrogenated” oil, which is used to make potato chips and fast fried foods. They also raise cholesterol.

*Monounsaturated fats* are good fats, including olive oil, canola oil, oils of nuts, peanut oil. These fats do not raise “bad” cholesterol and are protective against heart disease.

*Omega 3 fatty acids* is another important group of fats that is good for us. These are found in cold water fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring, etc., and flaxseeds. Omega 3 fatty acids actually lower “bad” cholesterol, cleaning out the blood vessels of cholesterol and fatty deposits. They also lower triglyceride levels. High triglycerides is a problem that many people taking protease inhibitors have. They also increase insulin sensitivity for people prone to diabetes and help support the immune system.

**Dairy** is a convenient and rich source of calcium and protein. If dairy products give you indigestion, there are other sources of calcium and protein. Other sources of calcium include: seaweed, nuts, dark green vegetables - e.g. kelp, almonds, kale, and tofu. Yogurt with live cultures which is the most digestible form of dairy containing helpful bacteria. Many people who cannot digest other types of dairy products can eat yogurt without problems. If you have a productive cough or congestion, please keep in mind that dairy products are mucus producing and can make your congestion worse. If you tend to have watery stools, or a yeast infection, it is best to avoid dairy products other than yogurt.

#### WHAT COMBINATIONS OF FOOD SHOULD I EAT?

For most people with HIV, a high calorie, high protein diet is recommended. Remember that the larger your normal body size and the more active you are, the more you will need to eat. Please use the “Nutrition Worksheet” provided to calculate and keep a record of your daily intake of the different food groups. Here is a recommendation for daily allowances of the different food groups:

Food Group	Servings	Notes
Vegetables and Fruits	8	10 servings is the same as 2 pieces of fruit, 7 half-cups of vegetables, and a small cup of juice
Starches (complex carbohydrates)	8	Starches include rice, grains, potatoes, noodles, pasta, bread, cereal
Protein	80-120 g	People who have HIV should eat more protein. However, if you have kidney or liver disease, you should eat less. Examples include: a cup of milk (8 g), Quarter-pound hamburger (21 g), whole chicken breast (26

		g), 2 cups of rice and beans (20 g), half-cup of tofu (13 g)
Fats		Avoid fatty meats, butter, margarine, vegetable shortening, and “hydrogenated” oils. If using oils, use olive or canola oil. Nuts are a good source of “good” fat and are high in protein.

\*Each serving is about ½ cup or 4 ounces of food.

Junk foods and desserts, although technically belonging to one or more of the different food groups (a combination of carbohydrates, sugar and fat), provide very little nutrition. For this reason, we will not calculate them into our servings per day formula.

### WHAT KINDS OF VITAMINS OR NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTATION SHOULD I TAKE?

We do not always get the vitamins and minerals that our bodies need from the food we eat. Please keep in mind, however, that a hand-full of vitamins does not replace the need for good meals. One important factor to note is that it is much easier for the body to absorb and utilize nutrients drawn from whole foods than it is from a vitamin tablet. Below are suggestions on types of supplements to take. Unfortunately, most supplements are not reimbursable or covered by Medicaid or insurance. For this reason, the supplements are grouped by **required** ones and then **additional** ones.

At the end of this section is a discussion on **recent health concerns** for those concerned about lypodystrophy, the disproportional appearance of body fat at the stomach, breasts and back of the neck, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, and diabetes.

#### Required Supplements:

- 2 multi-vitamin tablets per day - Make sure they contain the B vitamins, chromium and selenium. Medicaid and ADAP will cover this if they are prescribed by your physician. Multi—vitamins make sure that most of your basic vitamin and mineral requirements are covered.
- Vitamin E - 800 IUs (international units) per day. Take with meals. This is a fat-soluble antioxidant and protects us from toxins, and is important for the immune system. Too little Vitamin E might lead to peripheral neuropathy. Vitamin E might also increase AZT’s effectiveness.
- Vitamin C - at least 1,000 mg per day. Vitamin C is required by the immune system.

#### Additional Supplementation:

- 1 tablespoon of flaxseed oil per day. It is available at health food stores. It contains high levels of Omega-3 fatty acids which are essential for the immune system.
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon of acidophilus 3 times per day between meals. This can be bought at health food stores and should be kept refrigerated. Acidophilus and other live cultures are also found in yogurt. It is important for intestinal health. It is recommended to take acidophilus if you are taking antibiotics and/or if you are prone to thrush and yeast infections.

- Additional B vitamins in a B-complex form. As a group, the B vitamins are vital for the maintenance of a healthy nervous system, manufacturing red blood cells, converting carbohydrates into energy, and metabolizing amino acids. There is evidence that B vitamin levels tend to be low among people who are HIV-positive. Almost 25% of people with HIV have B-12 deficiencies. If your energy is low, ask your doctor if it is possible that your B-12 levels are low. They can give you regular B-12 injections which should be covered by insurance or Medicaid.
- Additional antioxidants - selenium (400 mg per day), zinc (25 mg per day), beta-carotene (50,000 IUs per day). Over 1,000 mg of selenium may be toxic. Over 100 mg of zinc with long term use may be toxic. Many experts advise people with HIV not to take Vitamin A.

***Remember, the best way to get most of these vitamins and minerals is through fresh, unprocessed foods, whole grains, lots of fresh vegetables and fruits (especially leafy greens, and orange and yellow fruits and vegetables), nuts and seeds, and fish.***

### **Recent Health Concerns:**

Nutritional concerns including lypodystrophy, high-cholesterol, high-triglycerides, and diabetes, conditions associated with the use of protease inhibitors, have emerged as additional health issues for people with HIV. These conditions may reflect how your body processes sugar and fat due to hormonal imbalances, such as decreased insulin sensitivity. You can improve these conditions through dietary changes, nutritional supplementation, and exercise.

If you have high triglyceride levels and uneven weight gain, eat more protein and cut out sugar. Avoid pasta, breads, wheat flour based foods, eat rice, grains, potatoes and other vegetables. In general, avoid fatty foods, trans fats, saturated oils, and foods high in cholesterol. Cholesterol is found in animal fat - red meats, high fat dairy products and egg yolks. Eat fish (not shellfish), or lean poultry instead of red meat. Use olive or canola oil. It is important to get enough of the good fats: take 2 tablespoons of flax seed oil per day or 2 grams of fish oils, and 2 grams/day Evening Primrose Oil.

Exercise is also important when you have these conditions. Please refer to the exercise section below.

Certain amino acids and minerals, available as nutritional supplements, can increase insulin sensitivity and lower triglyceride levels, which can address problems with lypodystrophy and high cholesterol. These supplements are still experimental, so please read more on them or ask an expert before taking them:

- **Chromium:** 1,000 micrograms of chromium per day may increase insulin sensitivity by about 40% without toxic side effects.
- **Alpha Lipoic Acid (ALA):** ALA might be even more effective in terms of improving insulin sensitivity and glucose disposal. It is shown to improve glutathione production, which leads to better survival for people with HIV. ALA can also reduce neuropathy. The recommended dose

for ALA is 400 to 1200 mg per day. People taking protease inhibitors should take this supplement.

- **NAC (N-acetyl-cysteine):** NAC has also been found to increase glutathione levels. You can find it in eggs and dairy products. The suggested daily dose is 1 to 2 grams per day. It is recommended that you take NAC with vitamins C, E and selenium. Please note that alcohol and Tylenol® (acetaminophin) are harmful to the body's glutathione levels.
- **Acetyl L-carnitine:** This also increases glutathione levels, reduces triglyceride levels, helps you burn fat better, and can treat neuropathy due to HIV medications. Take 1 to 3 grams per day. This is also available through your doctor in prescription form by the name of Carnitor.

### HOW CAN I KEEP MY FOOD SAFE AND CLEAN?

Earlier, we discussed the need to eat plenty of fresh foods. You also need to be careful about the forms of your food, especially raw foods, because they might contain dangerous parasites and bacteria.

- Always **wash your hands** thoroughly with warm water and soap before and after handling, preparing, and eating food. When cooking, wash hands immediately after handling raw meats or unclean produce before touching other foods that you are preparing.
- **Avoid raw or undercooked fish and meat.** Avoid sashimi and sushi. Make sure that chicken is fully cooked with no trace of blood. Avoid rare beef; the meat should be cooked until brown.
- **Avoid undercooked or raw eggs.** Don't eat runny eggs, mayonnaise, some salad dressings (such as Caesar), and some ice creams contain raw eggs. Make sure that you buy eggs that are not cracked. Make sure that your milk products have been pasteurized. Avoid soft, ripe cheeses such as brie.
- Thoroughly **wash and rinse all fruits and vegetables with warm water.** Wash and peel all fruits and vegetables that you plan to eat raw. Avoid fruits and vegetables that you wouldn't cook or peel, such as lettuce. You should only eat organic fruits and vegetables if they are cooked.
- **Avoid cooked foods that have been sitting out for more than 2 hours.** This often happens in buffets and delis. They can become filled with bacteria and other germs. Thoroughly re-cook before eating.
- **Throw away spoiled or rotten foods.** This includes any food that you may have in your house that is past the expiration or "sell by" date, and foods that have mold or rotten areas. Don't just cut off the moldy or rotten spot - get rid of the whole thing!
- **Refrigerate your leftovers and foods right away.** Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or below, and your freezer below 0°F. Do not thaw frozen foods on the counter - either microwave or thaw in the refrigerator.

- **Keep your kitchen clean!** In addition to general cleaning, after preparing meals, use a bleach solution (1-2 tablespoons of bleach to 1 gallon of warm water) to rinse off kitchen utensils, cutting boards and countertops, especially if they have come in contact with raw meats. Use a plastic cutting board, not a wood one, that you use only for preparing raw meats.
- **Use clean water.** To be safe from water-borne diseases (giardia, crypto and microsporidium), boil tap water for 1 minute before drinking, or drink bottled water. Note that not all bottled waters or filters are germ-free. You should still boil these waters if you are not sure. Never drink water out of a lake or stream!

## HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT INFECTION IN MY DAILY LIFE?

This is about preventing infection by maintaining cleanliness of your home and body. In addition to regular bathing and housecleaning, take the following steps:

- **Wash your hands often**, and definitely before eating, after using the bathroom, and when you get home from going outside.
- **Wear a surgical-type mask** around anyone with a contagious illness, in tight public places, such as the subway and health clinic waiting rooms.
- **Clean your bathroom weekly**. Use a bleach solution of 1 cup bleach to 1/2 gallon of water for disinfecting tubs, sinks, counters and floors. Use undiluted bleach for your toilet. Use rubber gloves - keep a pair for cleaning just the bathroom.
- **Clean kitchen surfaces** - sink, counters, floor with a bleach solution of 1 cup bleach to 1/2 gallon of water, once a week.
- **Don't share** towels, toothbrushes, razors or other personal items that may have body fluids on them.

## HOW CAN I KEEP SAFE FROM PETS AND ANIMALS?

- **Cats** pose special risks because dangerous germs can grow in their feces. If you have a cat, keep its litter box clean daily. Be careful when cleaning the litter - either have someone who is HIV negative to do the cleaning or wear a mask to avoid inhaling the dust generated by stirring up the litter. Keep your cat indoors. Don't feed it raw or undercooked meat. Immediately wash any cat scratches and bites. Don't let cats lick you, especially near broken skin. If you are getting a cat, get a healthy cat that is older than 1 year.
- For any type of pet, make sure they get **regular veterinary care**. Seek immediate attention for any animal with diarrhea. Keep them free of fleas or other parasites.
- **Avoid contact with animal wastes.**
- **Avoid stray animals** and contact with turtles, other reptiles, and animals that may have been smuggled into the US, such as birds and monkeys.

## HOW SHOULD I EXERCISE?

Everyone can gain from regular exercise. Exercise keeps your heart and lung systems strong, increases your energy, cleans out wastes and toxins from your body, cycles out dead cells, improves circulation in your immune system, helps your body to absorb stagnant fluids, tones your muscles, burns fat, and strengthens your body. By increasing certain chemicals in your body, exercise can also give you a “natural high” and make you feel happy. In Chinese medicine, exercise improves the circulation of qi and blood. A direct result can be improved sleep, reduced anxiety, and increased appetite.

In order to benefit, it is necessary to exercise at least 3 times per week, even if it means that you do light exercise for 20 minutes at a time. Provided below are suggested exercises for people who tend not to exercise. If you are just starting off, remember to not to do too much exercise. Start off slowly and for a short amount of time. If you tend to get shortness of breath upon light exertion (such as walking up stairs), if you have a heart condition, or have been recently ill, please consult your physician as to whether exercise is advisable for you at this time. Use the “Exercise Worksheet” provided to help you keep record of your progress.

- **Walking** - Create time, even if it is just 20 minutes, to walk, with both arms free, wearing comfortable sneakers or walking shoes. Walk in an area where you don't have to stop to wait for traffic lights. Keep your stride long. Don't forget to breathe. Stretch for at least 5 minutes before and after your walk. This is a convenient exercise that you can easily build up on by lengthening your time, distance and speed.
- **Tai chi and qi gong** are widely recommended for people with HIV because they are not strenuous and can build up one's inner strength, or *qi*. Also, they can be done indoors with a minimum amount of space. Tai qi and qi gong emphasize breathing and using slow movements to circulate and strengthen one's *qi*, and increase strength and flexibility. (APICHA offers classes).
- **Yoga** emphasizes breathing and different postures that stretch and strengthen the muscles and increase flexibility. Like tai chi and qi gong, the breathing techniques builds up ones inner strength and vitality, or *prana*.
- **Weight lifting** not only strengthens muscles, but it also increases the immune system. If just starting out, its best to lift weights with someone who is experienced. Start off with lighter weights that you can do at least 12 repetitions, and build up when you develop strength.
- **Aerobic exercises**, such as dancing, speed walking, and running are great for the heart and lungs. If you have not done these before, it is careful to not overdo them. For people with HIV, overly strenuous activities can deplete the body and actually lower ones resistance to disease. Make sure to stretch for at least 10 minutes before and after these types of exercises.

Remember when you are exercising that you are burning calories and increasing your metabolism - it is necessary to eat more and drink more fluids accordingly.

## NAVIGATOR FINANCIAL GUIDE

This section contains general information on your financial options in New York. These benefits can help you pay for things you need, including food, medication, and rent. Because the laws regarding these benefits change all the time, you *must* see a legal counsel or expert to get the most current and complete information. This information alone will not necessarily determine your eligibility.

Please note that applying for benefits could adversely affect your application for a change in immigration status (such as permanent residency or for citizenship.) If you have applied, or planning to apply for a change in your immigration status, you should first see a lawyer.

The benefits are divided in four sections:

1. Welfare Assistance
2. Social Security Assistance
3. Food Assistance
4. Medical Assistance

No matter what benefits you are applying to, it is always good to do the following:

- **KEEP A “DIARY.”** You should **keep a written record** of each person you speak to and when. Write EVERYTHING down, including what you talked about and what the worker tells you. If the worker has a supervisor, ask for their name as well. If the Center sends you to other agencies to get documents, you should make a record of each of these contacts as well.
- **KEEP ORIGINALS OF YOUR DOCUMENTS.** Important documents do sometimes get lost at welfare centers or other agencies. Always make copies of each document you give your worker, and make sure the worker gives you back the ORIGINALS.
- **ASK FOR RECEIPTS.** When you submit applications and other requests, always request a receipt from the agency. The receipt should show the date, what benefit was requested, what documents you have submitted, and what information is still needed to complete the application.
- **ASK QUESTIONS.** If you have any questions about benefits, eligibility or application procedures, contact APICHA at 212-620-7287 or 718-457-9662.

If you ever encounter discrimination that you have difficulty addressing on your own, please contact your case manager for advocacy or legal assistance. You can also report HIV/AIDS-related discrimination by calling the New York State Division of Human Rights at 1-800-523-AIDS.

## WELFARE ASSISTANCE

### WHAT WELFARE BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE?

If you have AIDS--or if you are HIV positive *and* have certain specific AIDS-related diseases or symptoms--you may be eligible for public assistance under one or more welfare programs administered by the New York City Department of Social Services. These programs also cover you when a family member living with you has HIV or AIDS.

Available benefits include:

- Rent Enhancement: Cash assistance for current rent
- Nutritional Supplement: Cash assistance for food
- Transportation Supplement: Cash assistance for transportation
- Home Care or Home Making services
- Cash assistance for *past* rent, if facing eviction
- Utilities: Cash assistance for utilities, if facing service cutoff
- Food Stamps
- Medicaid or Medicare

### AM I ELIGIBLE FOR WELFARE ASSISTANCE?

To receive public assistance on the basis of AIDS or HIV-related illness you must meet certain criteria:

If you have

- received a diagnosis of AIDS by a qualified medical professional
- OR**
- are HIV Positive *and* have had one or more HIV-related illnesses such as tuberculosis, thrush, repeated pneumonias, or wasting syndrome

then you may be eligible for assistance from the New York City Division of AIDS Services and Income Support (DASIS). DASIS will keep your HIV status confidential and will not share the information with other agencies without your consent. If you believe you meet these criteria, you should immediately apply to DASIS, which will review your application and make a determination of medical eligibility, usually within 24 hours. If you're not sure whether you meet these medical criteria, it is strongly recommended that you go ahead and apply.

Even if you know you do NOT meet the above medical eligibility criteria, or if your DASIS application is turned down, you may still be eligible for public assistance under regular Family Assistance or Safety Net Assistance welfare programs if you:

- meet appropriate immigration status requirements. You are eligible if you are:

- a **citizen**
- a **lawful permanent resident** who resided in the country *prior* to 8/22/96
- an **alien** who falls into certain **special categories**: a refugee, asylee, person granted withholding of deportation, a current or former member of the US military service, a person paroled into the US, or a PRUCOL (person residing under color of law)
  
- For Family Assistance (TANF), if you are a lawful permanent resident who arrived in the country *after* 8/22/96, you have to wait 5 years before you can receive any benefits.
- For Safety Net (cash), if you are a lawful permanent resident who arrived in the country *after* 8/22/96, you qualify if you have had 40 quarters of work. You will also be eligible after the first 12 months you are in New York State.

**AND**

- meet applicable income and resource requirements:

**NYC Department of Social Services Income Eligibility Formula**

Household Size*	Maximum Monthly Gross Income**	Maximum Semi-monthly Gross Income
1	\$651.40	\$325.70
2	866.79	433.35
3	1,067.45	533.70
4	1,272.25	636.15
5	1,481.30	740.65
6	1,635.75	817.85

\*Household size is the number of people living in your home.

\*\* Gross income includes all cash payments to the household.

**HOW MUCH ASSISTANCE WILL I RECEIVE?**

If you are eligible for welfare under the regular Family Assistance or Safety Net Assistance program, the amount you receive is calculated by the Department of Social Services (DSS) based on your income, financial resources, family size and the cost of rent and utilities. See the table below for the standard amounts that are provided:

Household Size:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Amount per additional person:
Total Food and Other	\$137.10	218.50	291.00	375.70	463.70	535.20	607.70	680.20	+\$72
Maximum Shelter	\$215.00	250.00	286.00	312.00	337.00	349.00	403.00	421.00	+\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$352.10</b>	<b>468.50</b>	<b>577.00</b>	<b>687.70</b>	<b>800.70</b>	<b>884.20</b>	<b>1,010.70</b>	<b>1,101.20</b>	<b>+\$72</b>

If you are eligible for DASIS on the basis of a diagnosis of AIDS or HIV-related illness, you might also receive Rent Enhancement, Nutritional and Transportation Supplement, and Home Care or Homemaking Services.

- FOOD and OTHER: \$137 for Household of 1; \$218 for 2; \$291 for 3; \$376 for 4; \$464 for 5; \$535 for 6
- RENT: DASIS clients receive up to \$480 per month for each DASIS client in the household, plus up to \$330 per month for each member of the household is on the same public assistance case but not DASIS eligible.
- NUTRITION and TRANSPORTATION: \$193 monthly per DASIS client in the household.

Your benefits amount depends on so many criteria that it is difficult to predict how much you will get. Here are some examples:

<p>Single HIV positive individual with no other income:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$400 actual rent + \$137 food and other <u>+ \$193 nutritional/transportation</u> \$730</p> <p>Note: although the maximum DSS will generally pay for a single person's rent is \$470, in this case, since the actual person's rent was less, DASIS will only pay the actual rent.</p>	<p>Single HIV positive individual with no other income:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$550 actual rent + \$137 food and other <u>+ \$193 nutritional/transportation</u> \$880 per month grant from DASIS</p> <p>Note – although the “maximum” DSS will generally pay for rent for a single person is \$470, this person's rent was more, so DSS agreed to pay it in an Exception to Policy.</p>
<p>HIV positive individual with 2 uninfected children with no other income</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$1140 actual rent + \$291 food and other <u>+ \$193 nutritional/transportation</u> \$1,624 per month grant from DASIS</p>	<p>Family of 2 HIV positive clients and no other income:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$940 actual rent + \$218 food and other <u>+ \$386 nutritional/transportation</u> \$1,544 per month from DASIS</p>

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR WELFARE ASSISTANCE?

If you believe you are eligible for assistance from the New York City Division of AIDS Services and Income Support (DASIS) on the basis of a diagnosis of AIDS or HIV-related illness, you should immediately take the following steps:

## 1. Obtain medical documentation of your condition

This documentation may consist of:

- a **Form M-11Q**, obtained from a DASIS Center, to be filled out by your doctor  
Available from: DASIS Serviceline, (212) 645-7070
- a **letter on your doctor's official letterhead** giving your full diagnosis;  
Available from your doctor.
- an **ADAP Application**  
Available from: ADAP Plus Hotline, (212) 542-2437, and at many hospitals, clinics and HIV service agencies

**OR**

- a **DASIS Referral Form** sent directly to DASIS by a hospital.  
Available from: DASIS Serviceline, (212) 645-7070 and at many hospitals, clinics and HIV service agencies

## 2. Make an appointment with DASIS by calling (212) 645-7070

or go in person to the main DASIS Center at:

12 West 14th Street  
5th Floor  
New York, New York 10011  
(between 5th and 6th Avenues)

You should say that you are requesting verification of your medical eligibility for DASIS services. Take your medical documentation (one of the forms above) to the Center or arrange to have them faxed to the DASIS Service-line at (212) 337-1647 [FAX] or mailed to the address above. If possible, always keep the original of this and all other medical documentation and provide copies to DASIS or other agencies. Your appointment may be scheduled at one of the DASIS offices located at many Departments of Social Services around the city.

**NOTE:** If you are homeless or have no food or income, you should take your medical documentation to the DASIS Center *in person* and ask for emergency assistance.

## 3. If DASIS determines that you *do* meet their medical eligibility requirements

Your case will be assigned to a case manager in the assessment or family unit. Your case manager will help you apply for all of the benefits and services for which you are eligible, under both regular Family Assistance or Safety Net Assistance programs and special AIDS/HIV assistance programs. The case manager will visit you at home or in the hospital if necessary.

## WHAT IF I'M HIV-POSITIVE BUT DON'T MEET THE DASIS CRITERIA?

If you have **NOT** been diagnosed with AIDS or one of the HIV-related illnesses on the DASIS list, but you believe that you are otherwise eligible for welfare, you can get an application at any of New York City's thirty-three Income Support Centers. To find out which center serves your local area, and the hours that the center is open, **call (718) 291-1900**. The center you should apply to is determined by your zip code.

When you go to your local center, you should:

1. Get an APPLICATION PACKET
2. Make an APPOINTMENT for an initial interview

### **WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR REGULAR OR DASIS BENEFITS?**

If you need **immediate money for food** or to avoid eviction, you should let the Center know. You should be given an interview the same day.

The application and/or your case worker will tell you what documentation you need. Normally you will be asked to provide:

- proof of your IDENTITY
- proof of IMMIGRATION status
- proof of RESIDENCE and RENT
- proof of your INCOME

The Center will also want to know *how you have been supporting yourself* until now. If you have been employed, you will have to show the last time you worked and the reason you stopped. If you have received unemployment insurance benefits, you will have to show your unemployment insurance book or some other proof. If you did not qualify for unemployment benefits, you will need a letter from the unemployment office. If you have borrowed money or received support from a relative or friend, bring in a letter from that person which states how much money or other support you have received from them and when. The letter should say if your relative or friend is no longer able or willing to continue to support you or loan you money.

If there are papers that you are unable to get or that require a fee, you should let your interviewer know. The Center is required to help you to obtaining the documents that you need. If it is not possible to obtain a particular document, even with the Center's help, ask the case worker if the Center will accept some alternative document to verify your eligibility.

## SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE

### WHAT SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE?

**Social Security Disability** (SSD, also known as “Title II”) provides cash assistance to workers who are either retired or who meet Social Security’s definition of “disabled.” SSD is available to workers who are in the United States lawfully, worked “on the books”, and paid taxes for a sufficient period of time. SSD benefits are not based on need, and you may receive them even if you have savings, property or unearned income. If you work, however, it may affect your status as “disabled.”

**Supplemental Security Income** (SSI, also known as Title XVI) provides needs-based cash assistance and is available to any disabled person, even if you have no work history, as long as you meet immigration status requirements, have limited resources and income and meet the medical requirements for disability. The amount of assistance is based your need, and is reduced if the you receive other income, or help from friends or family members.

Depending on your situation, you might be eligible for one or both of these programs.

### AM I ELIGIBLE FOR SSD OR SSI?

#### A. Disability Status (SSD and SSI)

Both SSD and SSI have the same standards for determining whether a person is disabled. The Social Security Administration defines disability in an adult as follows:

“Inability to perform substantial gainful activity by reason of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, or combination of impairments, which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months, or end in death, taking into account the individual’s age, education and work history.”

However, this does not count if you stopped working because of drug or alcohol abuse, and you could go back to work if you stopped abusing drugs or alcohol. However, disability *resulting from* past substance abuse (e.g. AIDS from a dirty needle; permanent brain damage from alcoholism) may still be disabling if stopping the substance abuse will not make the disability go away. Social Security uses a 5 step analysis to determine whether or not someone is disabled.

#### B. Further SSD Eligibility Requirements

If you are disabled according to the Social Security guidelines, you must meet the following additional criteria to receive SSD benefits:

- You are currently in the United States lawfully
- You have worked a total of 10 years in the United States, 5 of which must have been within the 10 years *immediately prior* to becoming disabled.

Although the general employment rule is that you must have worked “40 quarters” (10 years) in total before becoming disabled, there are a number of exceptions, for example, if you are under 31 or over 62, or if you are disabled because of blindness.

If you have questions about whether you meet the employment requirement, you should contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 for details of your work history or call APICHA at 212-620-7287 or 718-457-9662.

### **C. Further SSI Eligibility Requirements**

If you are disabled according to the Social Security guidelines, you must meet the following additional criteria to receive SSI benefits:

#### **Immigration Status:**

You may meet the immigration eligibility if you are in one of the following categories:

- a **citizen**
- **lawful permanent resident** who resided in the country prior to 8/22/96, and permanent residents who have worked on the books in the United States for ten years
- an **alien** who falls into certain **special categories**, e.g., a refugee, asylee, person granted withholding of deportation (for the first 7 years after obtaining that status), a current or former member of the US military service

#### **Financial Resources:**

Generally, an individual applying for disability cannot have more than \$2,000 in cash assets, or if part of a couple, may not have more than \$3,000. Additionally, an applicant may own other assets such as a home, a car of limited value, a burial space, household goods and effects, and a wedding or engagement ring.

#### **Income:**

The amount of money that you can receive from other sources will determine how much and whether you receive any SSI. You should be aware that SSI counts certain kinds of in-kind-assistance as income. Food, clothing or shelter given to you is budgeted against your monthly benefits rate. Furthermore, income of a legally responsible relative (spouse or parent) or the income of the sponsor of an alien may be deemed to the SSI recipient, reducing the monthly benefit amount.

## **HOW MUCH ASSISTANCE WILL I RECEIVE?**

### **Social Security Disability (SSD)**

If you are eligible for SSD, benefits range from \$200 to more than \$1400, depending on the years you have worked and the amounts you have earned.

## Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI)

If you are receiving no other income, an SSI recipient living in New York can receive the following amounts, as of 1999:

Living Alone		Living With Others		Living in the Household of Another	
Individual	Couple	Individual	Couple	Individual	Couple
\$587.00	\$855.00	\$523.00	\$797.00	\$356.34	\$546.67

If you are receiving public assistance and/or rent enhancement and /or nutrition and transportation supplement from the Division of AIDS Services (DAS) in amounts higher than the SSI amounts listed above, your DAS benefits will be reduced, so you will not have any additional money. However, you **must** still apply for SSI and follow through with the SSI application, in accordance with state regulations in order to remain eligible for DAS benefits.

### HOW CAN I APPLY FOR SSD or SSI?

To apply, you can call the Social Security Administration at **1-800-772-1213** and tell them that you want to apply for SSI and SSD. The Social Security Administration will send you an application to fill out and at the same time will set up an appointment for you with your local Social Security Office.

### WHAT IF DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH?

If you call the Social Security telephone number **1-800 772-1213**, they should direct you to a local field office where there are workers who speak your language. If the field office does not have a speaker who speaks your language, the office will try to get a translator, at no cost to you.

In addition, you can apply or get assistance with your application at the following offices, which have workers who speak various languages:

Chinatown Social Security Office at 32 Mercer Street, NY, NY 10013. Tel: (212) 226-4111. There are workers who speak: **Cantonese, Mandarin, Shanghainese, Tisani.**

Downtown Social Security Office at 26 Federal Plaza, Room 31-120, New York, NY 10278. Tel: (212) 264-5372. There are workers who speak **Hakka, Tisani, Cantonese.**

Flushing Social Security Office at 136-63 37th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11354 Tel: (718) 463-1349. There are workers who speak **Korean**, as well as **Cantonese, and Mandarin.**

In Rego Park Social Security Park 63-44 Austin Street, Rego Park, NY 11374. Tel: (718) 896-2569. there are workers who speak **Bengali, Korean and Hindi, Urdu, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Mandarin.**

If you need help completing the application form, the Social Security Office will provide assistance free of charge.

### **WHAT IF MY APPLICATION IS DENIED?**

Often Social Security will deny your application for SSI or SSD. If Social Security turns you down, you should file an **appeal**, which is called a “**reconsideration**” within *60 days* of your denial letter. You can do this at your local Social Security Office. If you lose your Reconsideration, you should request a **hearing** before an Administrative Law Judge. Your chances of being successful at a hearing are better than if you just reapply. Hearings may be complicated, so you should try to get an attorney or legal advocate to help you at your hearing.

## FOOD ASSISTANCE

### WHAT FOOD ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE?

The Food Stamp Program is a federally funded program, administered individually by each State, which helps provide food for 20 million individuals each day. It provides low-income households with coupons or electronic benefits that can be used at most grocery stores to buy food.

### AM I ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS?

**A. General Eligibility.** To participate in the Food Stamp Program, households may have no more than \$2,000 in “countable resources,” such as a bank account; or no more than \$3,000 if at least one person in the household is age 60 or older. Certain resources do not apply toward this limit; for example if you own a home, the house and land are *not* considered countable resources. Special rules are used to determine the value of vehicles owned by household members.

If you currently receive *only* welfare assistance or SSI you will generally be found to be within the resource limits for Food Stamps. However, you don’t have to be on welfare or SSI to be eligible.

### SPECIFIC INCOME REQUIREMENTS

**1. Income-based Qualification.** To qualify for Food Stamps based on income, your gross monthly income must be no more than certain specified dollar amounts, unless you fall into a special category. Gross income includes all cash payments to the household.

The table below shows the actual dollar income ceilings, for households of different sizes, that are used to determine food stamp eligibility in New York when no other qualifying conditions are present.

#### GROSS MONTHLY COUNTABLE INCOME -- *STANDARD*

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Add'l Pers.
	\$873	\$1,176	\$1,479	\$1,783	\$2,086	\$2,389	\$2,693	\$2,996	+\$304

**2. Age/Disability-based Qualification.** However, if any household member is age 60 or over, or is medically disabled, including HIV, there is NO *gross* maximum income limit for the household. In such a household, eligibility is determined by a *net* income of 100% of the poverty level. “Net income” means the amount of income remaining after certain specified expenses have been deducted. Calculating net income is complicated and cannot be based on any chart or simple formula. The only real way to calculate the income limit in such cases is to complete a full Food Stamp budget using all applicable deductions.

**3. Combined Households.** A person who is age 60 or over *and also* medically disabled can, along with his or her spouse, apply as a separate household from any other people they may be living with. This is true even if you cannot purchase and prepare meals separately. In such situations, however, the income of the non-disabled housemates may not exceed specified amounts below.

The table below shows the maximum income, for households of different sizes, that apply to non-disabled housemates, below age 60, living with applicants who are 60 or over and disabled:

**GROSS MONTHLY COUNTABLE INCOME — NON-DISABLED HOUSEMATES**

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Add'l Pers.</b>
	\$1,107	\$1,492	\$1,877	\$2,262	\$2,647	\$3,032	\$3,417	\$3,802	+\$385

(effective through 9/99)

**4. Expenses Higher than Income.** You should never be denied Food Stamps just because your monthly expenses are higher than your monthly income. Unfortunately, some people who apply for Food Stamps are *mistakenly* told they are not eligible for this reason, or they are told they must apply for welfare. There are many legitimate ways people can survive with incomes less than their expenses, such as going into debt, or receiving a loan from a relative or friend. If your expenses are greater than your income, you may wish to apply for both Welfare *and* Food Stamps at an Income Support Center.

Note, however, that some immigrants choose not to apply for Welfare for fear of the adverse impact this may have on their immigration application. For this reason, a person may choose *not* to apply for Welfare, but still apply for Food Stamps.

**B. Immigration Status/Eligibility Requirements.** The rules determining which immigrant statuses qualify for food stamps can be complicated. Because of this, if you have had a Food Stamp case:

- which was closed
- in which benefits were reduced, or
- in which your application was rejected due to immigrant issues

you should apply again for Food Stamps or request a review of your family's Food Stamp budget for possible increased benefits to individual household members who may still be eligible.

You might meet the immigration eligibility if you are in one of the following categories:

- **a citizen**
- **lawful permanent resident** who resided in the country prior to 8/22/96, and permanent residents who have worked on the books in the United States for ten years
- an **alien** who falls into certain **special categories**, e.g., a refugee, asylee, Amerasian, person granted withholding of deportation (for the first 7 years after obtaining that status)
- **a current or former member of the US military** service or their spouse or unmarried dependent child of a U.S. veteran/active duty
- **U.S.-born children of aliens.** Regardless of the adult's eligibility status, immigrants with dependent children who are U.S. citizens can ask for assistance on behalf of their children without jeopardizing their own immigration status.

Immigrants who are not eligible for Federal Food Stamps:

- **Undocumented (illegal) immigrants**
- **Most immigrants who entered the U.S. on or after August 22, 1996;** with the exception of those with special seven year exemptions
- **Other** adults (18 and older) who are NOT defined as elderly (65 on 8/22/96) or disabled, or under a special 7 year exemption status, or eligible under veteran/military rules, or eligible based on 40 quarters' work history rules

**“No Risk” in Applying for Food Stamps:** If you are an immigrant seeking to become a permanent resident of the U.S., you must establish that you are not likely to become a “public charge.” Participation in the Food Stamp program should have **no effect** on an application to become a citizen of the United States.

## HOW MUCH ASSISTANCE WILL I RECEIVE?

The amount of benefits you will receive will depend on many factors, including your income and your expenses (such as rent). However, the maximum Food Stamp allotment for households is:

<b>Household size</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Add'l Pers.</b>
<i>Max Amt. of stamps</i>	\$125	\$230	\$329	\$419	\$497	\$597	\$659	\$754	+\$92

Smaller households get more money per person than larger households. If you are disabled or not related to other household members, and if you prepare meals separately, you may qualify as a separate household.

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS?

There are four categories under which an applicant can apply for Food Stamps in New York City:

**1. Public Assistance Category:** When applying for public assistance at an Income Support Center, you can also apply for Food Stamps, even though eligibility guidelines and definitions of household composition vary.

**2. Non-Public Assistance Category:** If you are not getting other public assistance, you must apply in person at a Non-Public Assistance Food Stamp office. Call (718) 291-1900 for information and listings.

**3. SSI “Pure” Households:** SSI recipients who live alone or household of more than one person where the only income received is from SSI can *apply by mail*. There is a simplified application process. For information and applications:

SSI Food Stamp F-15  
233 Schermerhorn Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

(718)722-4009

**4. Homebound Category:** Homebound individuals, not receiving only SSI and not having an authorized representative to act on their behalf may apply by mail through the Homebound Unit. For information and applications:

Homebound Unit F-63  
151 Lawrence Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11217  
(718) 722-8114 or (718) 722-8118.

**Expedited Food Stamps.** Generally it takes 30 days for the Center to process your application. However, if you have no food or have recently lost income, you can get Expedited Food Stamps. In these circumstances, you can get an interview and start receiving food stamps within 5 days.

For Emergency Food Stamps, you must provide your name, a declaration that you have less than \$100 and some identification. You do not need to prove your immigration status for Emergency Food Stamps.

**Emergency Authorized Representative.** If you are unable to go shopping for food due to an extended illness, you have someone, an Emergency Authorized Representative, do it for you. If you receive Food Stamps and are unable to travel, contact your Center about this program.

## **AM I ELIGIBLE FOR OTHER FOOD PROGRAMS?**

There are several other supplemental food programs that may be available to you:

- **W.I.C. (Women, Infants, and Children's Supplemental Nutrition Program):** a program for low-income pregnant, lactating or postpartum women, infants and children less than five years old at nutritional risk. WIC provides food, coupons, for specific food items, and prenatal care, and will help you apply for other medical benefits. WIC **does not** require information about your immigration status.
- **School Breakfast and Lunch:** A program for children in all public schools. All children are eligible for free or reduced price meal depending on parental income.
- **Summer Meals:** During July and August, participating schools offer free breakfast and lunch for kids up to 18. They will not ask for information about your immigration status. Although the program is only for children, they will generally also provide food for the parent.
- **Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens:** They are open at various times and places. To find out where they are and if you can get food there, call City Harvest at (212) 533-6100 or 1 (800) HUNGRY2.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

### WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS WITH PRIVATE INSURANCE?

Under New York law, insurance is a contract between you and the insurance company, and it **cannot be canceled because you get AIDS** or any other illness. The insurance company can cancel your policy if you do not pay the required premiums. The company may also be able to take your insurance away if your insurance application contained a “material misrepresentation” about your health. Some policies must be renewed from time to time, and the insurance company may have the right not to renew the policy.

Under New York law, you have a **pre-existing condition** if, prior to applying for coverage:

- you sought medical treatment for a condition, or
- you had symptoms of a condition

Most policies have a pre-existing condition clause stating that, for a certain period of time, any such pre-existing condition will not be covered. A common time period for pre-existing conditions is 12 months, so any illness or condition you had when you started the policy will not be covered during the first 12 months the policy is in effect. It is important to emphasize, however, that ***after the expiration of a “pre-existing condition period” the policy will then begin to cover you for that condition.***

Remember, the best way to handle problems with insurance is by being informed. And the best time to learn about your coverage is before you apply for it, or at least before you have to submit a claim. By fully understanding your benefits, you'll be in a much better position to negotiate problems if they arise.

The rules for Government Medical Assistance Programs have been changing rapidly, both in terms of eligibility and services provided. However, below is a very brief overview of the major programs available to people with HIV. For more information on these programs, you can contact APICHA.

## **WHAT IS MEDICARE?**

Medicare is a federal program available to Social Security recipients who are 65 years of age and older, or who have been receiving Social Security Disability benefits for 2 years. Basically Medicare is the health insurance component of Social Security. Social Security recipients and their spouses are eligible for **Medicare Part A** which covers hospital care and a limited amount of "skilled" nursing care and home health care. For an additional cost, recipients are eligible for an optional **Medicare Part B** which covers part of physicians' costs and other medical services and supplies.

Medicare has certain limits on the types of services covered. Some of the most severe restrictions are that it does not cover *outpatient* medications, it only covers nursing home care if it is "skilled" care rather than "custodial," and it covers only 100 days of nursing home care per illness.

Social Security recipients are eligible for Medicare only after receiving Social Security Disability benefits for 2 years, or when they become 65, whichever comes first. If you are a recipient of Social Security, you can apply for Medicare at your local Social Security office.

For additional information you can call **Medicare Rights Center** at **(212) 869-3850**

## **WHAT IS MEDICAID?**

Medicaid is a joint federal, state and city program which provides medical assistance for eligible individuals and families with low incomes and limited assets, or who receive public assistance or SSI (Supplementary Security Income). It is also available to persons who are disabled or are over 65 and whose incomes are too high to qualify for public assistance or SSI, but who spend down any excess income on medical costs until they reach the Medicaid income level. Once this eligibility threshold is met Medicaid covers all types of medical care including inpatient care, outpatient services, medications, medical equipment, medical and dental appointments, medically necessary transportation and nursing home care.

Medicaid will pay for medical bills incurred up to three months prior to your application. When you apply, submit bills for this period with all supporting financial records substantiating that you were eligible for Medicaid during this period.

## **AM I ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICAID?**

You are probably eligible for MEDICAID if you receive SSI or Public Assistance. However, if you are not receiving the above, you may still be eligible if you have limited income and resources and meet the immigration status guidelines. You may meet the immigration eligibility if you are in one of the following categories:

- a **citizen**

- **lawful permanent resident** who resided in the country prior to 8/22/96,
- an **alien** who falls into certain **special categories**, e.g., a refugee, Amerasian Immigrants, asylee, person granted withholding of deportation, a current or former member of the US military service.

This list of immigrant eligibility is not complete, and changes regularly. If you have questions about your eligibility you may contact APICHA, or the Medical Assistance Program directly.

## **HOW DO I APPLY FOR MEDICAID?**

You can obtain Medicaid in any one of three ways:

1. A hospital may arrange for it;
2. You get it automatically with SSI or with Welfare;
3. You can apply directly for Medicaid from your local Medicaid Office.

For additional information you can call Eligibility Information Services, at Medicaid's **Medical Assistance Program** at **(212) 273-0047** or **237-0048**.

## **WHAT ARE ADAP AND ADAP PLUS AND THE HIV HOME CARE PROGRAM?**

The HIV Uninsured Care Program is intended to help people who are HIV positive stay healthy. There are three HIV uninsured care programs administered by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute:

**ADAP** (Drugs) covers medications to treat HIV and associated infections and illnesses.

**ADAP Plus** (Primary Care) pays for primary care services at enrolled clinics, hospitals, laboratory providers and private doctors offices. The services include medical evaluations, early intervention and ongoing treatment, disease monitoring, some dental and eye care, women's health, and most outpatient services.

**ADAP Home Care Program** pays for home care services to chronically medically dependent individuals as ordered by their doctor. The program covers home health aide services, skilled nursing, intravenous therapy administration and supplies and durable medical equipment.

The programs are free, and helps people who have HIV get the medication, medical care, and home care they need. These Uninsured Care Programs will pay for the care of people who are HIV positive who do not qualify for Medicaid, or who are awaiting Medicaid approval, or who have a Medicaid "spenddown."

If you have limited health insurance, are unable to meet deductibles or co-payments, have a policy with a waiting period, or are an adolescent without access to financial or insurance resources of your parents, you may be eligible.

## **AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ADAP?**

You can meet basic eligibility requirements if you are:

- HIV positive
- a New York State resident (can be proved with just a lease or even a rent receipt); and
- have liquid assets of less than \$25,000 (such as cash or stocks), and
- meet certain income guidelines:
  - Less than \$44,000 for a household of one,
  - Less than \$59,200 for two,
  - Less than \$74,400 for a household of three or more people.

**Note:** There is **no immigration status requirement**, so you will not be required to provide documents regarding your immigration status to be eligible for these programs.

## **HOW DO I APPLY FOR ADAP?**

A single application form requesting proof of residency, income and assets can be used to enroll in one or more of the programs. A medical application, signed by a licensed medical professional, is also required to verify HIV status. For Home Care applicants, a treatment plan prescribed by a physician must be submitted. Once an applicant is deemed eligible, an enrollment card is issued which may be used to receive care from an enrolled provider.

To receive more information and/or an application, call the **ADAP Plus Toll-free Hotline** at **1-800-542-2437**.

Copies of the application and staff assistance to complete it may be obtained from many local hospitals, clinics, and HIV service agencies.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Anemia:** low red blood cell count

**AIDS** (acquired immune deficiency syndrome): The late stage of HIV infection. A person has AIDS when she or he has certain opportunistic infections or CD4 cell counts below 200.

**Asymptomatic:** without any sign of illness.

**Acute:** refers to intense, short-term symptoms or illnesses that either resolve or evolve into long-lasting, chronic disease manifestations.

**Antibiotic:** an agent that kills or inhibits the growth of microorganisms, especially a compound similar to those produced by certain fungi for destroying bacteria. An antibiotic is used to combat disease and infection.

**Antiretroviral:** a substance that stops or suppresses the activity of a retrovirus such as HIV.

**Baseline:** the first CD4 count and viral load. These numbers are used to determine how effective your medications are.

**Biopsy:** removal of a small piece of tissue for microscopic examination to determine whether a patient has a particular disease.

**Bodily fluids:** refers to liquids naturally produced by the body such as urine, saliva and tears. The only bodily fluids having a high risk for transmission of HIV are: blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk.

**Bone Marrow:** soft tissue located in the cavities of bones. It is the site of blood cell production.

**CD4 Cell:** a type of cell involved in protecting the body against infections. Other names for CD4 cell are T-helper cell or helper T-cell. HIV attacks CD4 cells. You can determine your stage in HIV infection by your CD4 count.

**Chronic:** refers to symptoms and diseases that last for an extended period of time without noticeable change.

**Combination Therapy:** using at least two drugs simultaneously to more effectively combat a disease. See also HAART.

**Diabetes:** a condition causing high blood sugar

**ELISA** (Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay): the most common test used to detect the presence of HIV antibodies in the blood, which are indicative of ongoing HIV infection. A positive ELISA test result must be confirmed by another test called a Western Blot. See also Western Blot.

**Enzyme:** A protein in the body that causes chemical changes inside cells.

**HAART** (Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy): aggressive anti-HIV treatment usually including a combination of protease and reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTI and NNRTI) whose purpose is to reduce viral load to undetectable levels.

**Holistic (Wholistic) Medicine:** various systems of health care, both traditional and modern, that are based on the body's natural healing powers, the ways the body relates to the environment.

**Immune Deficiency:** a breakdown or inability of certain parts of the immune system to function, making a person susceptible to certain diseases that they would not have contracted with a healthy immune system.

**Immune System:** the body's complicated natural defense against disruption caused by invading microbes and cancers.

**Immunization:** the process of protecting an individual against infectious diseases by injecting weakened or killed infectious organisms into the body. Also called a vaccine.

**Logs:** Short for logarithms. A mathematical measurement to simplify large numbers in multiples of 10. For example, 100,000 is 5 logs. Logs are used to express results of viral load.

**NRTI** (Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor) and **NNRTI** (Non-Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor): drugs that act to directly combine with and block the action of HIV's reverse transcriptase, thus preventing the production of new functional HIV particles.

**Opportunistic Infection (OI):** An infection that can occur in persons with weak immune systems due to AIDS, cancer, or immunosuppressive drugs.

**Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR):** An very sensitive test that creates millions of copies of HIV-1 RNA. This allows the detection of HIV, even in small amounts.

**Primary HIV Infection:** the flu-like syndrome that occurs immediately after a person contracts HIV. This initial infection precedes seroconversion and is characterized by fever, sore throat, headache, skin rash and swollen glands. Also called acute infection.

**Pancreatitis:** inflammation of the pancreas

**Peripheral neuropathy:** a condition that causes tingling and/or numbing of the fingers and toes

**Prophylactic medications:** medications given to patients to prevent a disease from occurring

**Protease Inhibitor:** a drug that binds to and blocks HIV protease from working, thus preventing the production of new functional HIV particles.

**Seroconversion:** development of detectable antibodies to HIV in the blood as a result of infection. It normally takes several weeks to several months for antibodies to the virus to develop after HIV transmission. When antibodies to HIV appear in the blood, a person will test positive in the standard ELISA test for HIV.

**Set point:** The steady balance between the virus and the body's immune system usually established after primary infection and reported as a viral load measurement.

**Side Effect:** any reaction that results from a drug or therapy. The term usually refers to a negative event, such as nausea, blood disorders or neuropathy.

**Viral load:** The measurement of HIV RNA in the blood.

**Vitamin:** substances essential in small amounts for normal metabolism, growth and development of the body.

**Western Blot:** a test for detecting the specific antibodies to HIV in a person's blood. It is used to verify positive ELISA tests. A Western Blot test is more reliable than the ELISA, but it is harder and more costly to perform. All positive HIV antibody tests should be confirmed with a Western Blot test.

## RESOURCES

Many of the services listed in this reference section require that you have a referral from a case manager or proof of your HIV status. There are also many services that are not listed but are available to you. It is best to first contact a Community Based Organization that can refer you to the best services:

- *Asian Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV and AIDS: APICHA*  
APICHA offers multilingual services for Asians and Pacific Islanders living with AIDS or HIV infection. APICHA has multilingual case managers and bilingual peer advocates who can assist with legal, medical and general advocacy. All services are confidential and free, regardless of your gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, nationality, religion or creed.

APICHA provides free legal and financial assistance, a food pantry offering Asian foods, acupuncture service, medical referrals, and a variety of workshops. The workshops include a Self-healing Group (tai chi, qi gong, and yoga classes), Art and Tea Group, +API, Mandarin-speakers Group, and Wellness Discussion Group.

Manhattan:  
275 Seventh Ave.  
Suite 1204  
New York, NY 10001-6708  
212-620-7287

Queens:  
74-09 37<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Room 400  
Jackson Heights, NY 11372  
718-457-9662

### Other community organizations include:

- *Body Positive*  
provides general HIV information as well as legal and general support services.  
19 Fulton Street  
Suite 308B  
New York, NY 10038  
212-566-7333
- *Gay Men's Health Crisis*  
provides a wide variety of case management, medical, legal, financial and educational services for people living with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones. They also offer free acupuncture services.  
119 West 24<sup>th</sup> St.  
New York, NY 10011-3629  
212-807-6655 (hotline)

### Other Services and Information:

- *The HIV Wellness Source-Book*, Cohen, Misha Ruth, O.M.D., L.Ac. Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1988. A comprehensive, current resource that provides information on different healing therapies to manage HIV and AIDS. This book provides background in TCM theory and

includes self care programs involving diet, exercise, and meditation, as well as information about TCM approaches to treating a number of HIV-related conditions.

- *Direct AIDS Alternative Information Resources (DAAIR)*. If you join DAAIR, you have access to the lowest prices for high-quality supplements and access to information from highly knowledgeable staff and literature. The membership cost for people with HIV is \$5 a year. DAAIR will send you a free “Membership Outreach Pack” that contains a lot of helpful information. Their website is <http://www.immunet.org/daair>. To contact, call: (212) 725-6994 or 1-888-951-LIFE.
- *God’s Love We Deliver (GLWD)*. GLWD prepares and delivers life-sustaining meals to homebound people living with AIDS in all five boroughs of NYC and in Hudson County, NJ. You can also request different categories of food, such as Asian and South Asian foods. GLWD also provides essential nutrition education and counseling to symptomatic and asymptomatic people living with HIV or AIDS. For services, call: (212) 294-8100.
- *Siddha Shiva Center*. This center offers free vegetarian meals and yoga classes.  
c/o Chelsea Hotel  
222 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011  
212-627-3180
- *The Momentum Project*. They offer free groceries.  
Stephen Wise Free Synagogue  
30 West 68<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10019  
212-877-4050
- *New York Area Yoga Association*. They provide free yoga classes for people with HIV. Classes are 8 to 10 p.m., every Tuesday  
303 East 8th Street (between Avenues B and C) in Manhattan.  
Call to confirm: (212) 647-9821
- *HIV Law Project*. They provide assistance on immigration issues.  
841 Broadway, Suite 608  
New York, NY 10003  
212-674-7590
- *HIV/AIDS Discrimination Hot-line*. They take reports on discrimination cases through the New York State Division of Human Rights.  
1-800-523-AIDS

## **Internet Web-Sites with information on HIV/AIDS:**

### **[www.aegis.com](http://www.aegis.com)**

AIDS Education Global Information System (AEGIS), touted as the largest HIV/AIDS database in the world. Contains more than 340,000 documents from 1986-on with links to daily news and updates.

### **[www.actis.org](http://www.actis.org)**

AIDS clinical trials that are open for enrollment, from the CDC and FDA, including fact sheets on the trials and links

### **[www.cpchiv.org](http://www.cpchiv.org)**

The Chinese Planning Council's bilingual Chinese/English web site on HIV includes information on sexuality issues, safer sex, HIV testing, TB, Hepatitis, and how HIV affects application for legal residence. The Chinese text downloads as a graphics block, so it might take some time, but it is comprehensively translated.

### **[www.critpath.org](http://www.critpath.org)**

Enormous Philly-based resource, founded by PWAs.

### **[www.critpath.org/aric](http://www.critpath.org/aric)**

Eclectic mix of AIDS info, ranging from lobbying info to hotlines and advocacy group contacts.

### **[www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com)**

Hundreds of publications about AIDS treatment options, demographics, safer sex, experimental drugs, HIV/AIDS in the workplace, safer sex, prevention, including a discussion group where you can ask HIV specialists questions.

### **[www.cdcnac.org](http://www.cdcnac.org)**

The CDC-based clearinghouse site for AIDS

### **[www.pslgroup.com/AIDS.HTM](http://www.pslgroup.com/AIDS.HTM)**

Doctor's guide to AIDS info and resources

### **[www.hivinsite.ucsf.edu](http://www.hivinsite.ucsf.edu)**

Int'l site of original info on AIDS, run by UC San Francisco, containing extensive info on clinical trials.

### **[lists@web-depot.com](mailto:lists@web-depot.com)**

To get on this HIV-Support mailing list where people living with HIV/AIDS can share emotional support and medical info, send an e-mail to the address with the message "subscribe hiv-support". You can also e-mail <davon@web-depot.com> for more info.

### **[www.hivatis.org](http://www.hivatis.org)**

US Public Health Service's HIV/AIDS web site

### **[www.iapac.org](http://www.iapac.org)**

Int'l Association of Physicians in AIDS Care

**[www.isleuth.com/dise-ai.html](http://www.isleuth.com/dise-ai.html)**

Internet Sleuth on AIDS allows you to search ten internet sites about AIDS with a single interface. You can also look up general info on various databases through <[www.isleuth.com](http://www.isleuth.com)>

**[www.ama-assn.org/special/hiv/hivhome.htm](http://www.ama-assn.org/special/hiv/hivhome.htm)**

*Journal of American Medical Association's* AIDS info center

**[www.natap.org](http://www.natap.org)**

National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project, tons of treatment resources and info.

**[www.niaid.nih.gov](http://www.niaid.nih.gov)**

NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) site

**[www.aidsnyc.org](http://www.aidsnyc.org)**

NYC community-based AIDS organizations with national links.

## NUTRITION WORKSHEET

Use this as a nutritional plan for each day. You should work with your case manager or nutrition counselor to fill it out.

Meal	Food Group	Servings	Specific Foods
<b>Breakfast</b>	Starches		
	Protein		
	Fruits & Vegetables		
<b>Snack 1</b>	Starches		
	Protein		
	Fruits & Vegetables		
<b>Lunch</b>	Starches		
	Protein		
	Fruits & Vegetables		
<b>Snack 2</b>	Starches		
	Protein		
	Fruits & Vegetables		
<b>Dinner</b>	Starches		
	Protein		
	Fruits & Vegetables		
<b>Snack 3</b>	Starches		
	Protein		
	Fruits & Vegetables		

## EXERCISE WORKSHEET

Use this as an exercise plan for each week. You should work with your case manager or physical therapist to fill it out.

*Remember that you should exercise at least 3 times as week, 20 minutes each time.*

Type of Exercise ↓		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Time:						
	Time:						
	Time:						
	Time:						

### Description of the Exercises:

Exercise	Description	Aerobic/Anaerobic	Location & Equipment

## MEDICAL WORKSHEET

Date	CD4 Count/%	Viral Load	Log Change	Notes

Medication Name	Date Started	When to take (time, days)	How much? (# pills, amount)

## NOTES