

Be Good to Yourself



A Self-Care Manual
for
Inmates
Living with HIV

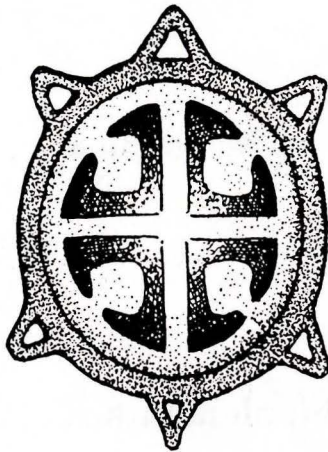
Be Good to Yourself
A Self-Care Manual
for Inmates Living with HIV

Produced by:
Sharon Kondo
With the participation of:
Stephan Korsia
Martin Majchrowicz
Dwayne Turner

We would like to thank
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CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Acupressure	3
Stress Reduction Techniques	19
Exercise	23
Massage	26
Nutritional Supplements	31
Safer Sex	40
Resources	42



INTRODUCTION

Being an inmate with HIV can be very scary. You may feel isolated, rejected, and unable to take care of your health. Lack of access to HIV specialists and new, promising drugs, lack of control over your diet, a stressful environment... everything seems to be working against you keeping a healthy immune system.

Fortunately, it is not so! There are *a lot* of things that you can do, even in the restricted environment of a correctional facility. Policies regarding access to some treatments (such as vitamins and herbs) may vary in different facilities, but there is a wealth of practices that can be self-administered and do not require any approval. The goal of this handbook is to provide you with some practical information regarding some of the ways *you* can take care of your health. You need not feel helpless!

Many of these treatments originated in oriental medicine or other forms of traditional therapy. They were not specifically designed for HIV infection, but to strengthen natural defenses. Most of them have not been formally tested as a treatment for HIV disease, mainly because traditional medicine is largely neglected by scientists and physicians in charge of AIDS research in Western countries. For this reason, no warranty or endorsement is made as to the success of any of these treatments. This information should be considered as a source material only.

You are the only one who can decide whether a particular therapy is improving your well-being, so you must take an active, responsible role in your healthcare program. Take the time to know and understand your body - notice what effects nutrition and stress have on your body, be aware of your physical limits and potentials, learn to trust your own judgments to guide your own treatment. **Taking control over your health is the best favor you can do for yourself...so do it!**

ACUPRESSURE

What is acupressure? Basically, it is a form of acupuncture where the needles are replaced by firm pressure of hands or fingertips. The only equipment you need to perform acupressure is your hands. Acupressure, when done properly, is safe and has no side-effects.

Like acupuncture, acupressure is based on the stimulation of very specific points on the body, which are often named in a very poetic fashion. Acupressure has been used in China for thousands of years and is even older than acupuncture. If you massage your temples when you have a headache, you are doing acupressure!

Acupressure and acupuncture are being used extensively on people with HIV disease. A study from the University of Miami, Florida has shown significant improvement in immune function in patients with early symptomatic HIV disease who received acupuncture treatment. Oriental physicians have also reported stabilization of T- cells in patients who received acupuncture treatment weekly. Whether these effects are due to direct action or indirect action (such as stress reduction) on the immune system remains to be determined.

Acupressure has been shown to increase the production of endorphins (the morphine-like substance that makes you mellow after a meal or a good work-out) by the brain. Endorphins are necessary for a balanced immune system. In addition, research suggests that acupressure increases the production of alpha-interferon by the body, a substance necessary to fight viruses and that has been shown to partially block the making of new HIV particles by infected cells.

Acupressure relieves stress and tension, improves blood circulation, and can relieve pain. It is a very good complementary

therapy to conventional medical care. It does not replace medical supervision, but it may help you maintain a positive attitude and a healthy immune system.

How To Practice Acupressure

To be a professional acupressurist may require years of training. Here, we want to introduce you to a few basic techniques that you may find helpful every day.

Before beginning, loosen any constricting clothing. It is okay to apply pressure through clothing, however. Choose whatever position you find most comfortable, either sitting or lying down, but feel free to reposition yourself as you press points in different areas.

To apply pressure on an acupressure point, you can use your thumbs, the sides of your hands, your palms, or your knuckles. A good technique is to use the tip of the middle finger supported by the other fingers around it.

Pressure must be applied and released **gradually**. This is extremely important, to allow the tissues time to respond. Increase the pressure slowly until it "hurts good", but remember that this is not a test of pain endurance. Apply pressure gradually and steadily for at least **3 minutes**. Pressure must be applied perpendicularly to the skin. In other words, the finger or the hand should not pull the skin in any direction but inward. You may want to lean your weight on your hands for a more steady and penetrating pressure.

After 3 minutes, you should start to feel a regular pulse beating at the pressure point, and the soreness of the region should start to disappear. Then, **gradually** release the tension, and finish with 20 seconds of light touch. When pressing, you may try to slowly massage the pressure point without releasing pressure. Long,

penetrating pressure acts as a relaxant for the points. Rapid, pulsating pressure stimulates the points and is not recommended, except when done by a professional acupressurist.

Acupressure can be performed daily, and no less than 2 to 3 times a week. A session should last less than an hour, and you should not work on one region of the body for more than 15 minutes at a time. During the session, practice deep abdominal breathing. Sometimes pain is felt in places other than the one being pressed. This is called "referred pain" and is a normal reaction to pressure.

Acupressure should never be performed before or after a meal. Wait at least an hour after eating to start practicing. Acupressure should **NEVER** be applied to the abdomen, and light pressure is required when working on lymph areas (such as groin, armpits and sides of the neck). After a session, it is important that you stay warm.

If you are doing acupressure on yourself, some points in the middle of your back may be impossible to reach. You can use a round object (the size of a golf ball) and lay on it on a hard floor. Your weight on the object against the floor will apply pressure to these unreachable points.

On the following pages, you will find some acupressure points we have chosen to help you cope with problems that are common in people with HIV. They are listed along with the benefits they provide and diagrams which should help you locate the points.

Boosting the Immune System

The daily stresses of life, such as poor nutrition, lack of exercise, and emotional distress, can sometimes overburden and exhaust your body. These energy imbalances can then weaken your immune system. Acupressure, deep breathing, and stretching exer-

cises can help reduce the stress that may weaken the immune system as well as relieve muscle tension that has built up in your neck, shoulders, and back.

The following points are for boosting the immune system:

Bearing Support (Fig. 1)

Location: Near the spine, off the tips of the shoulder blades.

Benefit: Used for resistance to colds and flu.

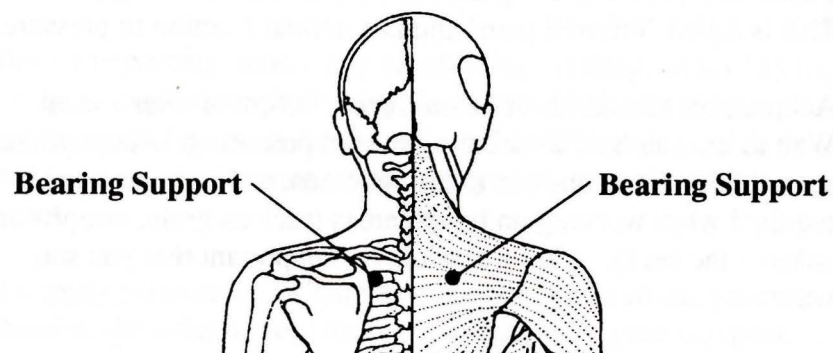


Figure 1

Sea of Vitality (Fig. 2)

Location: Lower back, near the waist line, two to four finger widths away from the spine.

Benefit: Boosts the immune system and relieves lower back pain and tension.

Caution: If you have back problems such as broken bones, do not use acupressure. If your back is weak, use light touching.

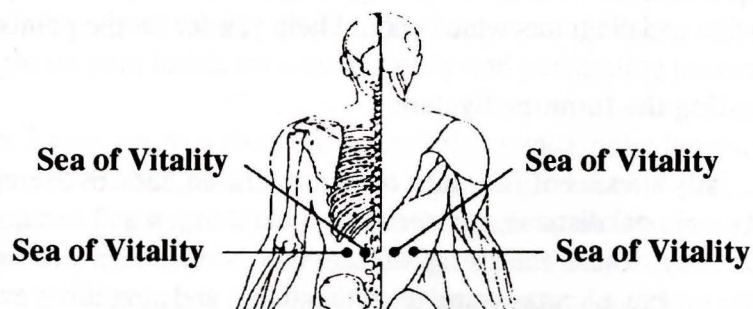


Figure 2

Elegant Mansion (Fig. 3)

Location: About three fingers to the left and right of the breastbone, just below the collarbone.

Benefit: Strengthens the immune system, relieves chest congestion, breathing difficulties, asthma, coughing, anxiety, and depression.

Sea of Tranquility (Fig. 3)

Location: On the center of the breastbone, three finger widths up from the bottom of the breastbone.

Benefit: Strengthens the immune system and relieves stress and depression.

Sea of Energy (Fig. 3)

Location: Two finger widths below the belly button.

Benefit: Strengthens the immune system, improves the function of the immune system, relieves stomach pain, constipation, gas, and general weakness.

Three Mile Point (Fig. 3)

Location: Four finger widths below the knee cap and one finger width towards the outside of the shin. If you move your foot up and down, you should feel the muscle flex.

Benefit: Revitalizes the entire body, boosts the immune system, and aids in muscle tone, digestion, and relief of fatigue.

Bigger Rushing (Fig. 3)

Location: Near the front of the foot, on top, in the depression between the big and second toe.

Benefit: Strengthens the immune system. Relieves hangovers, headaches, eye fatigue, and fainting spells.

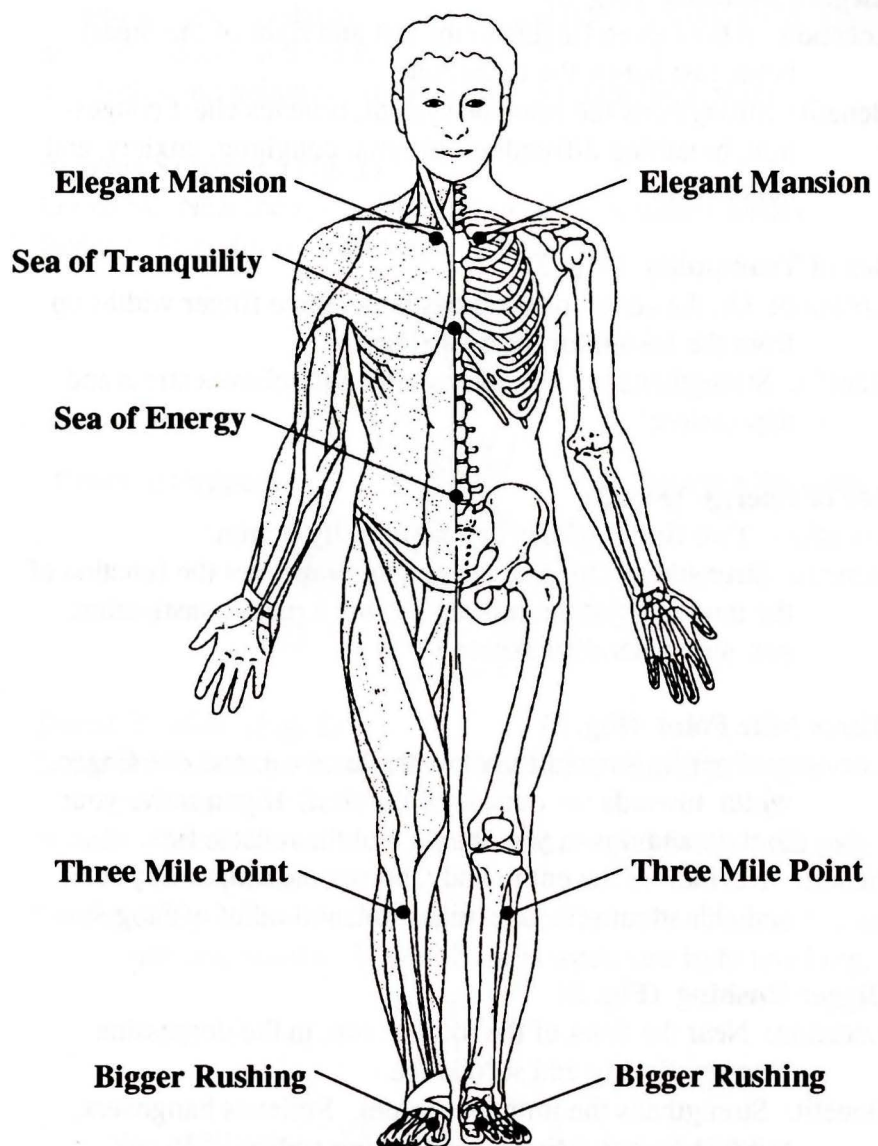


Figure 3

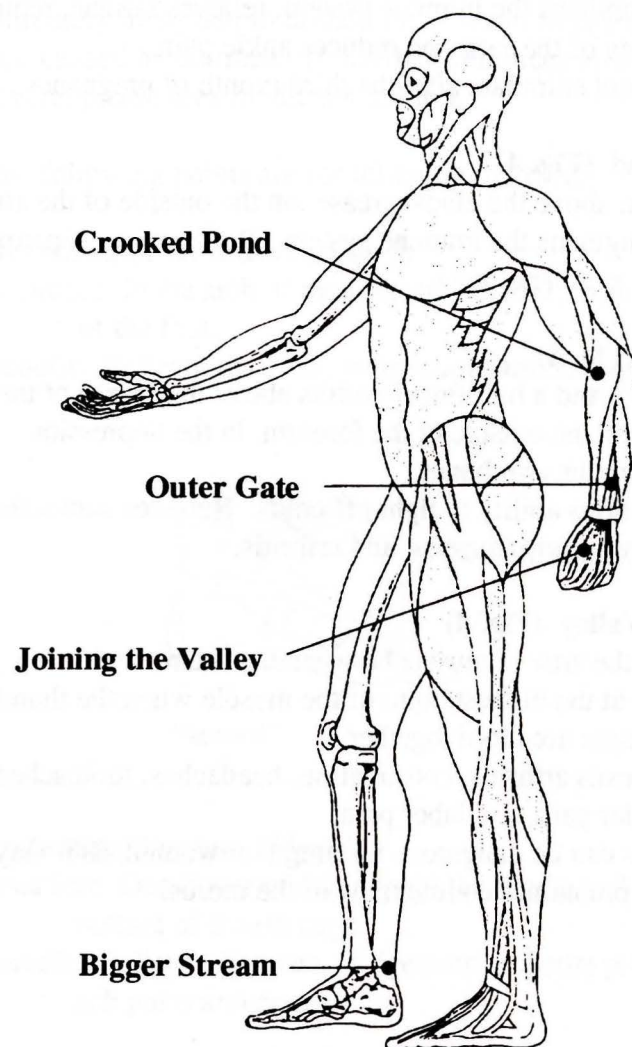


Figure 4

Bigger Stream (Fig. 4)

Location: In the depression between the Achilles tendon and the anklebone, near the back of the ankle.

Benefit: Strengthens the immune system, relieves fatigue, reduces swelling of the feet, and reduces ankle pain.

Caution: Do not stimulate after the third month of pregnancy.

Crooked Pond (Fig. 4)

Location: Just above the elbow crease, on the outside of the arm.

Benefit: Strengthens the immune system. Relieves constipation, elbow pain, and fever.

Outer Gate (Fig. 4)

Location: Two and a half finger widths above the crease of the wrist, on the outside of the forearm, in the depression between the two bones.

Benefit: Increases ability to fight off colds. Relieves sore wrists, extremely sore muscles, and arthritis.

Joining the Valley (Fig. 4)

Location: In the area of muscle between the thumb and index finger at the highest point of the muscle when the thumb and finger are close together.

Benefit: Relieves arthritis, constipation, headaches, toothaches, shoulder pain, and labor pain.

Caution: This can be dangerous for pregnant women, as it may cause premature contractions of the uterus.

Diarrhea

Acupressure can relieve diarrhea and help to maintain a balanced digestive system. Using specific points in the abdominal area and points on the legs and feet can help regulate diarrhea and condition the intestines. Diet is also an important factor in alleviating diar-

rhea. Recommended: a diet which is low in fiber (whole wheat breads, fruits, and juices), low in caffeine, low in cold, sweet foods (ice cream, soda), and high in protein and carbohydrates. It is extremely important to drink a lot of water to counteract dehydration caused by diarrhea. If diarrhea continues or becomes more severe, please seek medical attention.

The following points are for relieving diarrhea:

Grandfather Grandson (Fig. 5)

Location: In the arch of the foot, one thumb width behind the ball of the foot.

Benefit: Relieves diarrhea, indigestion, and nausea.

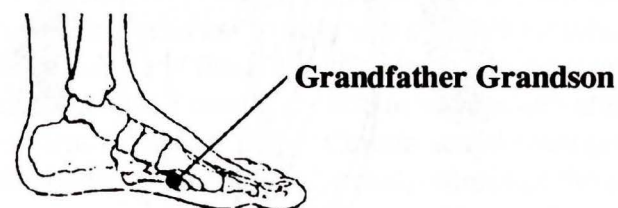


Figure 5

Abdominal Sorrow (Fig. 6)

Location: One finger width in from the nipple and down to the bottom of the rib cage.

Benefit: Relieves diarrhea, indigestion, appetite problems, stomach pains and cramps.

Sea of Energy (Fig. 6)

Location: Two finger widths below the belly button

Benefit: Relieves diarrhea, constipation, and gas.

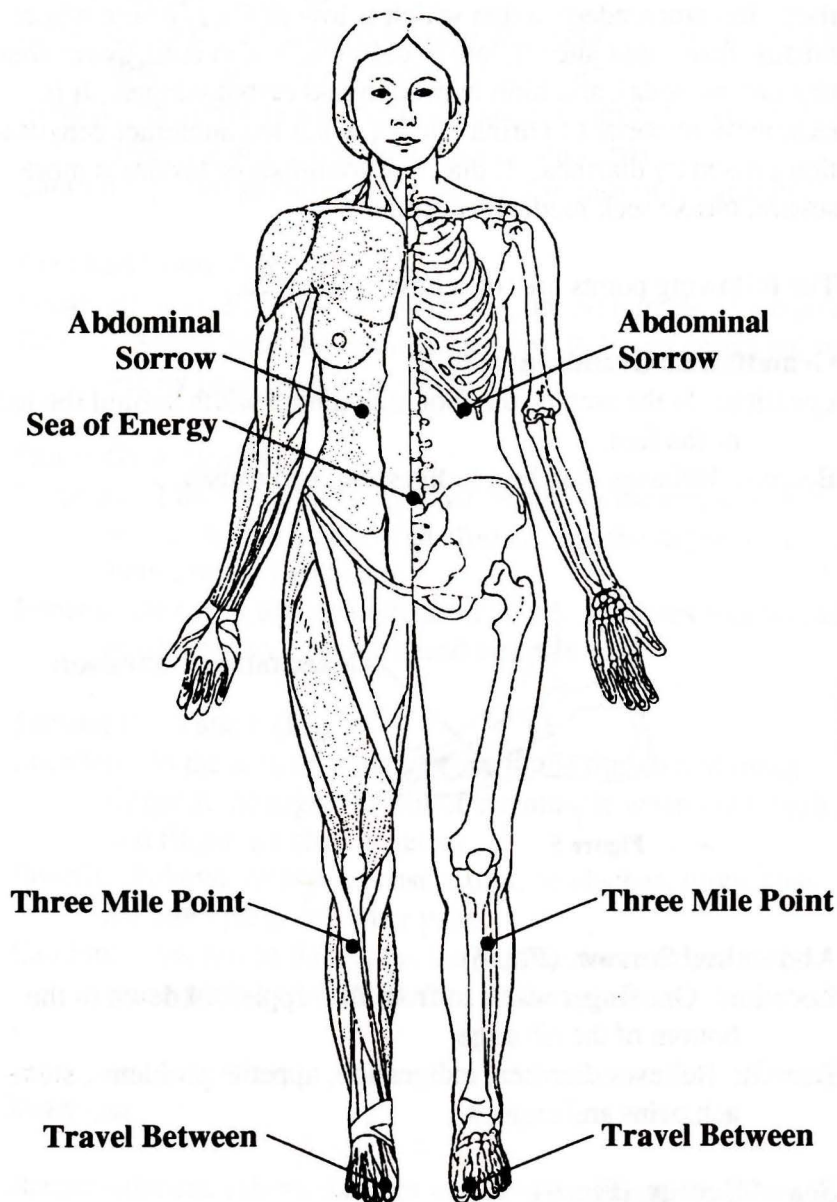


Figure 6

Three Mile Point (Fig. 6)

Location: Four finger widths below the kneecap and one finger towards the outside of the shinbone. If you move your foot up and you feel your muscle flex, you are on the right spot.

Benefit: Helps regulate digestion and helps strengthen and tone the whole body.

Travel Between (Fig. 6)

Location: The point between the big and second toes.

Benefit: Relieves diarrhea, headaches, and nausea.

Colds and Flu

When your immune system becomes weakened for any reason, your body becomes less resistant to infection by other viruses, such as those that cause colds and flus. The symptoms that most people feel, such as runny nose and cough, are due to your body's attempt to eliminate the virus from your body. Certain acupressure points can stimulate the body to react quicker, to help eliminate the virus faster. After trying acupressure, you may notice the symptoms may worsen; this is because your body is working harder to get rid of the virus. Keep in mind that this is not a *cure* for the cold, but may help to reduce the length of time you are sick or prevent you from coming down with a cold in the future.

The following points are for cold and flu relief:

Bearing Support (Fig. 1)

Location: Off the tips of the shoulder blades, three finger widths from the spine.

Benefit: Stimulates the body's natural resistance to colds and flus.

Drilling Bamboo (Fig. 7)

Location: In the depression of the eye socket just above the bridge of the nose.

Benefit: Relieves sinus congestion and headaches.

Facial Beauty (Fig. 7)

Location: Under the cheekbone, in line with the pupil.

Benefit: Relieves head congestion, stuffy nose, eye pressure and fatigue.

Welcoming Perfume (Fig. 7)

Location: Just outside of each nostril towards the cheek.

Benefit: Relieves stuffy nose, and any facial pain or numbness.

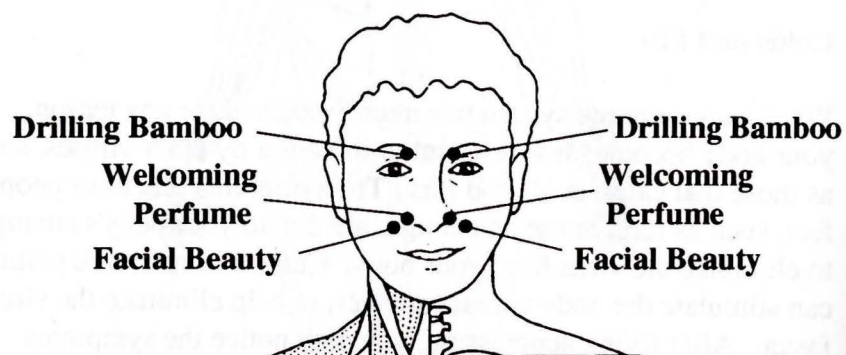


Figure 7

Crooked Pond (Fig. 4)

Location: Just above the elbow crease on the outside of the arm.

Benefit: Relieves cold symptoms, reduces fever, and strengthens the immune system.

Joining the Valley (Fig. 4)

Location: At the highest spot of the muscle on the back of the hand that protrudes when the thumb and index finger are together.

Benefit: Relieves colds, flu, head congestion, constipation, and headaches.

Caution: Pregnant women should not stimulate this point.

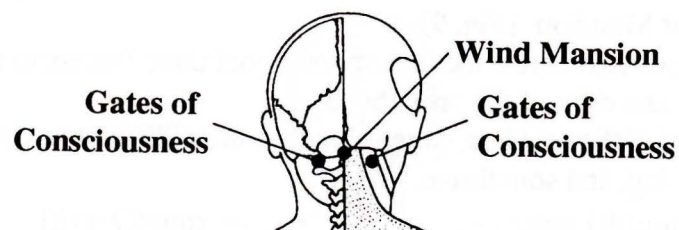


Figure 8

Gates of Consciousness (Fig. 8)

Location: Just below the base of the skull, in the depression, about one finger width from the spine.

Benefit: Relieves headaches, stuffy head, and neck pain.

Wind Mansion (Fig. 8)

Location: Under the base of the skull, in the depression directly in line with the spine.

Benefit: Relieves stuffy head, headaches, stiff neck, and mental stress.

Third Eye Point (Fig. 9)

Location: Between the eyebrows, just above the bridge of the nose.

Benefit: Relieves head congestion, stuffy nose, and headaches.

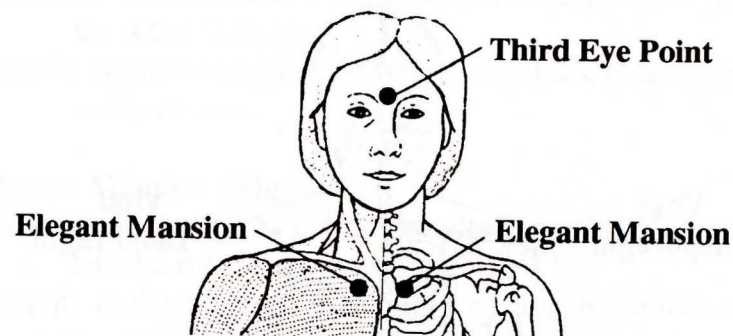


Figure 9

Elegant Mansion (Fig. 9)

Location: Just below the collarbone, about three fingers to the left and right of the breastbone.

Benefit: Relieves chest congestion, breathing difficulties, coughing, and sore throat.

Coughing

Acupressure can be an effective cough-suppressant therapy. Specific points on the chest, throat, neck, and upper back benefit the respiratory system, relax your body, and relieve coughs. Because a severe or uncontrolled cough can be very harmful, and can be a symptom of serious illnesses such as pneumonia and bronchitis, always seek medical attention.

The following points are for relieving coughing:

Vital Diaphragm (Fig. 10)

Location: About halfway down the shoulder blade, in the depression between the shoulder blade and the spine.

Benefit: Relieves coughing and other breathing problems.

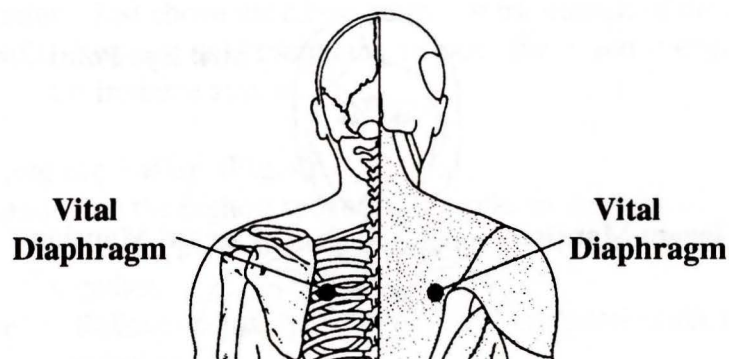


Figure 10

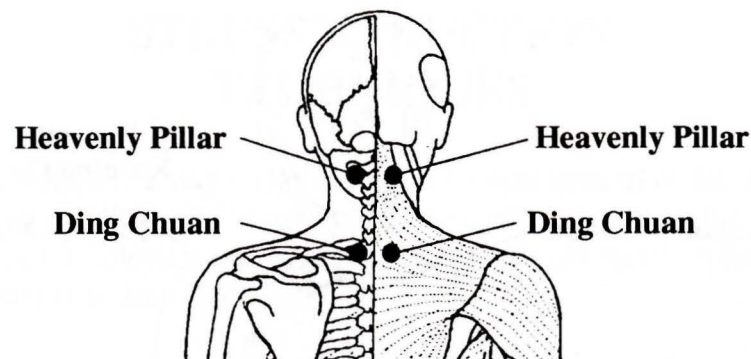


Figure 11

Ding Chuan (Fig. 11)

Location: On both sides of the spine, in line with the tops of the shoulder blades.

Benefit: Relieves coughing, throat problems, and shoulder and neck pain.

Heavenly Pillar (Fig. 11)

Location: One finger width below the base of the skull and one finger width away from the spine, on the muscle.

Benefit: Relieves sore throat, heaviness in the head, and stress.

Heaven Rushing Out (Fig. 12)

Location: At the bottom of the throat, in the depression just below the Adam's Apple.

Benefit: Relieves cough, sore throat, bronchitis, chest congestion, and heartburn.

Elegant Mansion (Fig. 12)

Location: In the hollow below the collarbone, three fingers to the left and right of the breastbone.

Benefit: Relieves chest congestion, breathing difficulties, asthma, coughing, and anxiety.

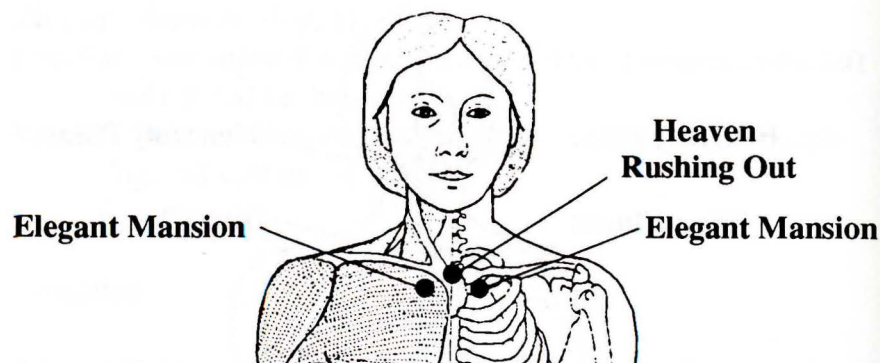


Figure 12

References

Michael Reed Gach, *Acupressure's Potent Points*, Bantam Books, December 1990

STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

Stress can have a very negative impact on your general health and well-being. Stress is and always will be a part of your life, but you can learn to alleviate it or lessen its effects on your body's systems by practicing deep relaxation.

Relaxation must be practiced in order to be mastered. It is easily learned and can lead to both mental and physical changes in your well-being. In addition, it may also have other effects: it may lead to an increase in red and white blood cells, it may improve your appetite, sleep, energy level, and mood.

Meditation and visualization are two forms of deep relaxation that can benefit you in these ways.

Meditation

Everyone has the ability to concentrate on certain things and shut out distractions. However, with meditation, your mind concentrates inward and shuts out things going on around you. Meditation is the state achieved when turning the mind's concentration inside and upon the self, a state of perfect concentration. The closest thing to meditation is the experience of deep sleep where time, space, and causation do not exist. With deep sleep, there is little long term change in your thinking, but with meditation, there are profound effects on your psyche (your way of thinking and seeing the world).

There is no specific set of "instructions" to use to meditate, it is just a state of mind that you must train yourself to reach. The following suggestions should help guide you in the right direction.

1. Try to clear your mind. Command your mind to forget the past, present, and the future.
2. Sit in a comfortable position and keep your spine and neck straight. A cross-legged position makes a triangular path for the flow of energy. All of your body processes slow down while in this sitting position.
3. Try to regulate your breath. Begin with five minutes of deep breathing to bring oxygen to the brain. Then slow your breathing until it is almost undetectable.
4. Keep your breathing to a slow, steady rhythm. Breathe in for 3 seconds and breathe out for 3 seconds.
5. Let your mind wander around at first. When thoughts come up, don't get upset or impatient, just let them come and go without paying them any attention.
6. Don't try to force your mind to concentrate. It will occur naturally.
7. Select a focal point just above or between the eyebrows. The mind can rest on this point when it tires. This spot is known as your "third eye".
8. Some people use this time to create personal sounds or phrases. You can make them up, and they will become your personal "mantra". Or, if you do not want to create your own, you can use an "OMMMMMMM" sound. This sound is repeated over and over again during meditation. If you prefer not to repeat this sound out loud, you can visualize it and mentally repeat it. This, in fact, is thought to be stronger and to lead to more "pure thought".
9. After **10 to 20 minutes** of meditation, you may move into the **visualization** stage.

Visualization

Visualization is using your mind and imagination to create change.

- An important aspect of visualization is the initial state of deep relaxation, which can be reached through any method which works best for you. The meditation section above describes a common method of relaxation. Some people prefer to perform visualization while lying down with their eyes closed, but you may choose whichever position you find most comfortable. At first, you may have a difficult time relaxing; however, the more you do it, the easier it will become.
- Relaxation may be easier if you start by visualizing yourself in another place, such as the beach, the mountains, or any other peaceful setting.
- Once you have become completely relaxed, concentrate on an image or process that you *would like* to occur, until you actually *see* it happening. For example, you might imagine HIV exploding or KS sores dissolving.
- Try to maintain this state of total relaxation for as long as possible. Most people can maintain this state for 30 minutes or longer.
- The main thing to remember is that this is a very creative process that can be used in many ways. No one way is the "best" way. The method that works for *you* is the best.

Relaxation, in its various forms, is an experience that cannot be described in so many words, just as colors cannot be described to a blind man. You cannot be taught what to feel. So, don't feel frustrated if you have trouble reaching a meditative state in the beginning; with time and practice it will become second nature to you.

You may feel some of the benefits of deep relaxation immediately, but if you make an effort to practice regularly (every other day), you may begin to see a positive impact on your overall health.

Last, but not least, remember that although deep relaxation cannot replace good medical care, it can contribute to an overall sense of well-being and good health.

Sit Back and RELAX

Close your eyes and feel your body relax. Wiggle your toes, letting them relax. Rotate your feet so your ankles relax. . . Gently move your legs, feeling your calves, knees, and thighs relax. . . Now tighten your buttocks muscles; let them relax. . . Take several long, slow, deep breaths into your abdominal area, letting your belly relax. . . Whatever you are holding on to inside your mind, just let it go. . . Let your whole back relax. . . Relax your arms. Feel each finger relax. Tell your shoulders and neck to relax. . . Let go of any tension in your forehead and eyebrows. . . Let your temples and ears relax. . . Lips, teeth, and tongue relax. Gently move your jaw from side to side, letting it relax. . . Relax your nose and your throat and tell your eyes to relax completely. . . Finally, feel your whole body totally relax. . . Allow your thoughts to flow, letting your mind. . and body. . . completely. . . relax. . .

References

- Bob Flaws, *Nine Ounces: A Nine Part Program for the Prevention of AIDS in HIV Positive Persons*, Blue Poppy Press, Feb. 1989
- Shakti Gawain, *Creative Visualization*

EXERCISE

Exercise is an important aspect of health maintenance for everyone. When discussing exercise, it is important to distinguish between aerobic exercise and weight training. Aerobic exercise is defined as any exercise that raises your pulse to near double the resting rate for at least twenty minutes. Examples of aerobic exercise are running, basketball, and jump-rope. Weight training is lifting weights to increase muscle mass. Most people try to combine these two different methods of exercise for optimal benefit. Both of these types of exercise can benefit people with HIV/AIDS in different ways.

Aerobic exercise has been shown to benefit people with HIV/AIDS by increasing their T-cells and giving them an overall feeling of better health. A study from the University of Miami Medical School demonstrated that people with HIV/AIDS who regularly practice aerobic exercise and relaxation techniques have a sustained increase in their T-cells and remain healthier longer. In order to receive the full benefit, you need to exercise at least 20-30 minutes every other day. It is known that aerobic exercise increases your endorphins (a morphine-like drug produced by your body during exercise), which may help to regulate your immune system. Exercise itself is also known to help reduce stress and depression, as well as to increase self-esteem. The benefit of a healthier immune system from aerobic exercise may be due to a combination of all of the above.

Weight training can benefit people with HIV/AIDS in many ways. Although there have not yet been any studies examining the effects of weight training on people with HIV/AIDS, some benefits

are obvious. It may be helpful to increase your muscle mass to help delay the progression of wasting syndrome (deterioration of muscle tissue). If you have more muscle, the effects of wasting syndrome may not be as severe. Along with increased muscle mass, the other benefits of weight training are increased strength and energy, increased self-esteem, and reduction of stress and depression.

The best results will be achieved by combining these two workout regimens: using light weights with many repetitions and allowing only short rests in between sets can give you an excellent aerobic workout at the same time. Or, you can alternate your workouts, with an aerobic workout one day and weight training on another day, plus one day of rest (no exercise) per week. This type of workout schedule will allow you to concentrate on the different types of workouts to get the maximum benefits of each.

One important concept that you must keep in mind while exercising is **moderation**. Suggested aerobic workouts are 20-30 minutes every other day. Suggested weight training is 60-90 minutes every other day. **Do not over-exert yourself.** Too much exercise can suppress your immune system. After exercising, you should feel more energetic and better than you did before you started. If you feel you need to take a nap after you exercise, then you are exercising too much.

Finally, remember that everyone is different, and what is good for one person may not be good for another person. Everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses, and this is what you need to explore for yourself. Start out slowly, don't over-exert yourself, and most important of all, have fun.

Important Points to Remember

- Aerobic Exercise: 20-30 minutes, every other day
- Weight Training: 60-90 minutes, every other day
- For maximum benefit, try a combination of aerobic exercise and weight training, alternating every other day, with one day off per week.
- Do not over-exert yourself

References

Bob Flaws, *Nine Ounces: A Nine Part Program for the Prevention of AIDS in HIV Positive Persons*, Blue Poppy Press, February 1989

MASSAGE

Massage is used around the world as a method for relaxing muscles and to promote an overall feeling of well-being. In prison, it may be difficult (or you may not be allowed) to massage each other. But you can still get most of the benefits of massage through **self-massage**.

Massage can improve blood circulation and relieve some of the aches associated with illness. For example, headaches and a flu-like all-over achy feeling can be partially relieved by massage. These aches are associated with HIV, opportunistic infections of HIV disease, and side-effects of some medications. In addition, massage decreases stress which you may be holding within the muscles of your body, and which may have a negative effect on your immune system.

Self-massage is easy to perform on almost any part of the body that is within your reach. There are two basic massage "moves". The first is a circular motion massage. Place your thumb on the middle of the muscle. Apply enough pressure so that you feel a "good hurt". Move the thumb in a small circle. Move slowly, gradually increasing the size of the circle until you are circling the outer area of the muscle. Repeat this several times until you feel the muscle relax. Remember to breathe deeply and slowly.

The second "move" uses the entire hand and is best for large muscles, such as the muscles of the upper leg. There are three important points to remember about this move. First, use the entire hand, especially the area beginning at the tip of the thumb and ending at the tip of the index finger. Second, apply enough pressure at one end of the muscle so that there is a "good hurt". Third, **after** applying pressure, rub the hand along the length of the muscle. Always move first towards the heart and then away from

the heart to stimulate the natural flow of blood. Once again, don't forget to breathe slowly and deeply.

Belly Self-massage

The Japanese consider the belly (the area from the diaphragm to the top of the pubic bone) to be a person's vital center. The belly contains the stomach, intestines, liver, spleen, kidneys, and bladder. These are major vital organs of the body. Some diseases occur, according to oriental medicine, because these organs are out of balance. You can tell if the organs are out of balance if there is pain, lumps and bumps, abnormal tension in the muscles of this area, and/or a pulse sensation around them. This could be a sign of disease for which you don't yet have noticeable symptoms. You can try to reduce this imbalance with pressure applied with your own hands.

Belly self-massage can be done in the morning just after you wake up, or at night before you go to sleep, and is most beneficial if done for approximately 20 minutes, every other day.

You begin by lying on your back with your knees drawn up. If the feet are spread slightly apart, the knees can fall together in the center and hold themselves up without any further effort. Begin breathing slowly.

Part I

1. Press under the **right** ribs with the flats of the fingers of both hands. Breathe out (exhale) as you begin pressing. Continue to press and breathe out to a count of six.
2. Next, breathe in and move the fingers down and to the right a few inches, along the lower edge of the rib cage. Again, press and breathe out to a count of six. Repeat this step two more times, each time moving further down and to the right, until you wind up pressing under the floating ribs (the lowest ribs) on your right side.

3. Now, return to the midline beneath the ribs and repeat the process, this time moving to the **left** in four exhalations (breaths out).

4. Repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 two more times, each time pressing a little harder. Be careful not to press too hard in the area immediately below the ribs.

You may experience a little pain, resistance, or tension in this area due to congestion in the liver and the gallbladder. But after practicing self-massage over a period of a few weeks, these problems should disappear and you will be able to press deeper and harder.

Part II

1. Position your hands on the **lower right** of the stomach next to the hip bone.

2. Exhale and press down for a count of six. As you breathe in (inhale), move up the stomach a few inches. Continue until the hands reach beneath the ribs again.

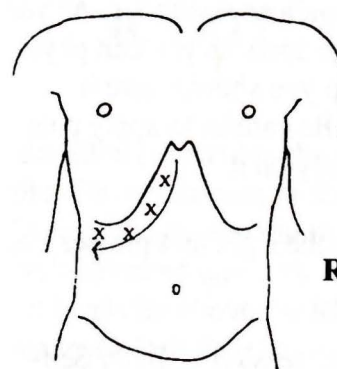
3. Do this three times on the right side, each time starting closer to the midline of your stomach.

4. Now, begin at the **center** beneath the ribs.

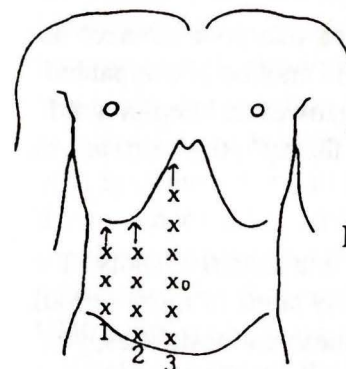
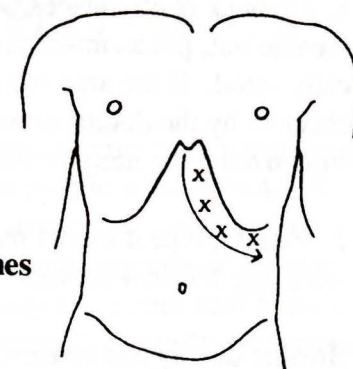
5. Press down and breathe out for a count of six. As you inhale, move down the stomach a few inches. Repeat until you reach a point just above the pubic bone.

6. Do this three more times on the **left** side of the stomach, each time starting further over towards your left side.

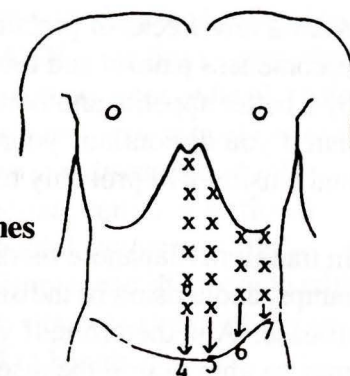
7. Repeat the sequence up the right side and down the left side three times, each time applying more pressure.



Part I
Repeat 3 Times

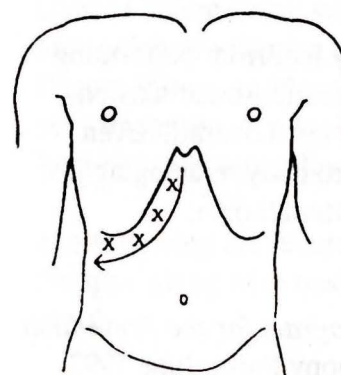


Part II
Repeat 3 Times

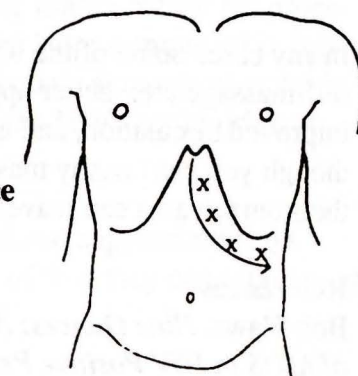


Part III

Go back to any painful or tender areas.



Repeat Once



Part III

1. Go back to any places where you felt pain or resistance. As you breathe out, put as much pressure on these spots as you can physically stand. If the area is a lump or bump you should have it checked by the doctor or medical staff. Be careful to apply pressure *around* the lump or bump, not directly on it.

2. Finally, repeat **Part I** one time, out to the right in 4 presses and out to the left in 4 presses.

Breathe deeply and relax to conclude your session of Belly Self-massage.

After a few weeks of practice, you may find that your stomach has become less painful and more supple. This may be accompanied by a better appetite and better digestion. However, keep in mind that if you discontinue your self-massage therapy, the pain, lumps, and tension will probably return.

In traditional Japanese medicine, it is felt that sensitive spots, lumps, and tension in the abdomen are early signs of more serious disease. And therefore, if you eliminate these abnormalities, you may be able to stop the disease processes even before symptoms arise. In a more general sense, since the belly is considered the *Root* of the entire body, massaging it massages the *Root* of all the rest-- if the root of a plant is healthy, the leaves and branches will be healthy as well.

In any case, some of the benefits you may feel from performing self-massage are: better appetite, relief from muscular tension, improved circulation, and a higher energy level overall. Even though you can't easily massage your entire body, massaging just the stomach area can leave you feeling better all over.

References

Bob Flaws, *Nine Ounces: A Nine Part Program for the Prevention of AIDS in HIV Positive Persons*, Blue Poppy Press, June 1992

NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

Nutrition is probably the most important component of a self-care plan for any disease or illness. Because people with HIV/AIDS have difficulty absorbing essential nutrients from their food, a well-balanced diet with supplements of both vitamins and minerals (at levels far above the RDA) is necessary for proper health maintenance. Deficiencies of certain vitamins and minerals can weaken your immune system, making you more prone to diseases and infections. There is a significant relationship between nutrient levels and disease progression - people with deficiencies tend to have more rapid progression towards AIDS. Studies suggest that vitamin and mineral supplements can increase energy level, assist in maintaining a healthy immune system and may actually boost your immune system to help prevent certain diseases and infections. Other studies have demonstrated that certain nutritional supplements may even have some anti-viral and/or anti-HIV properties. For these reasons, it is recommended that people with HIV/AIDS supplement their diets with vitamins and minerals to maintain or enhance their overall level of health.

Unless otherwise indicated, the best time to take supplements is with meals, preferably during the middle of the meal for optimal absorption. Supplements in tablet form will be absorbed better if chewed before being swallowed. Water is also critical for proper absorption of vitamins and minerals and helps remove toxic substances from your blood. Drinking adequate amounts of water is very important, especially for people with HIV - try to drink at least eight glasses a day.

The following are recommended nutritional supplements and dosages, along with basic descriptions of how they can affect your health.

SUPPLEMENT	BENEFITS	DOSAGE	HELPFUL HINTS
Vitamin A (Beta Carotene)	Data suggests that Vit A may be instrumental in maintaining a healthy immune system. May increase T-cells, assist in production of antibodies, and enhance immune system response. It is also suspected that carotenoids like beta carotene may help to control Kaposi's Sarcoma, an uncontrolled growth of blood vessels which results in pink or purple lesions internally or on the skin.	130-330 mg/day or 20-50,000 i.u./day or until the insides of your hands turn slightly orange	It is preferable to take beta-carotene instead of Vitamin A pills. When beta-carotene is taken, the body turns it into Vit A. Beta Carotene is non-toxic, even at high doses, whereas Vit A can produce significant toxicity. Toxic effects of Vitamin A may include: dry skin, cracked lips, headaches, fatigue, and joint pain.
Vitamin B-6	B-6 deficiency has been shown to be related to low CD-4 cell counts, as well as tension, anxiety, manic behavior, and depression. B-6 aids in DNA and red blood cell production and protein metabolism.	100 mg/day	Take the pyridoxal phosphate form of B-6, rather than pyridoxine. A larger dosage may be needed if you are taking AZT.
Vitamin B-12	Deficiency of Vit B-12 has been associated with loss of energy (possibly due to loss of red blood cells - anemia), memory loss, and possibly peripheral neuropathy (neurologic dysfunction).	2,000 µg injection 3 times a week or "ENER-B" every 3 days	The best method of receiving supplemental Vit B-12 is through intra-muscular injection. However, the next best and most convenient method is through a nasal gel, "ENER-B". Because B-12 may be deficient due to malabsorption of nutrients in the small intestine, the pill form is not recommended.
Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid)	Studies show that Vit C may raise white blood cell count, increase alpha-interferon production, and counteract immune suppression related to stress. High doses may have anti-viral effects and may even inhibit HIV. Vit C also acts as an antioxidant by clearing toxic substances from your body.	Up to 10,000 mg/day with meals Divide your dose among meals, do not take all at one time	Because high doses of Vit C have been known to cause stomach cramps and diarrhea, it is best to start with low doses, gradually increasing to up to 10,000 mg/day, or as much as is tolerable to your body. The powder form is more easily absorbed and is less expensive than the pill form. Vit C, as with all vitamins, works best if taken with foods in which it naturally occurs, such as orange juice.

SUPPLEMENT	BENEFITS
Vitamin E	Like Vit C, Vit E is an anti-oxidant. The immune system may be boosted through enhanced function of white blood cells, increased B& T cell production, and protection of macrophages. Recent studies have shown that Vit E helps to reverse the toxic effects of AZT.
Acidophilus	Acidophilus helps to replenish bacteria which are necessary for proper digestion. It may also help prevent candida (thrush) problems and diarrhea. People with HIV/AIDS are usually Acidophilus deficient.
Folic Acid	Aids in production of white blood cells and hemoglobin (the pigment in red blood cells, which transports oxygen through the body). Because drugs such as AZT and Bactrim/ Septra are known to lower white blood cell count, it is suggested that you take folic acid to counteract such effects. Folic acid also enhances the effect of Vitamin B-12.
NAC (N-acetylcysteine)	NAC is an amino acid that turns into glutathione when digested by the liver. It is believed that elevating the level of this anti-oxidant (a possible anti-viral) will help to maintain a healthy immune system. Glutathione may also slow the production of HIV by inhibiting TNF, an HIV-stimulating substance produced in large amounts by the immune system in HIV+ individuals.

DOSAGE	HELPFUL HINTS
400 units/day	DO NOT use the acetate esterified form of Vitamin E, as it lacks the anti-oxidant activity.
1/4 Teaspoon or 2-4 Capsules before meals	If you have Candida or diarrhea when using acidophilus, you may need to increase your dosage. Keep acidophilus refrigerated if possible.
400 - 800 micrograms/day	400 micrograms/day should be sufficient for people who are not taking AZT or Bactrim.
500-600 mg 3 times a day	Take NAC between meals, on an empty stomach. In the test tube, the properties of NAC are enhanced by Vitamin C. Some people experience side-effects from NAC, such as nausea, diarrhea, or asthma attacks.

SUPPLEMENT	BENEFITS
Zinc	Increases the number of natural killer cells (a type of blood cell that kills foreign organisms), while enhancing the ability of white blood cells to engulf and destroy foreign organisms. It is important to note that taking too much zinc can be hazardous. Do not take more than the recommended dose. A zinc overdose may suppress your immune system and may result in increased fungal infections.
Iron	Allows for proper red and white blood cell production. One study has demonstrated that increased iron intake may increase the length of time before the development of AIDS.
Selenium	Increases the number of natural killer cells and enhances the production of antibodies. Also an anti-oxidant.
Spirulina	A great source of protein. This blue-green algae is believed to enhance the function of the thymus gland and other immune components. Recent studies show that certain species of blue-green algae may contain chemicals effective against HIV.
Garlic	Garlic extracts have been shown to have general antibacterial and detoxifying effects. Can also inhibit the growth of <i>Candida albicans</i> (thrush). Some possible side effects: diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting.

DOSAGE	HELPFUL HINTS
100 mg/day or less	If you have a fungal or bacterial infection, do not take more than 50 mg/day. Try to balance long-term use with copper supplements (2-4 mg/day). Do not take copper and zinc supplements at the same time, however. DO NOT USE ZINC LOZENGES. Use of zinc lozenges results in high concentrations of zinc in your mouth and throat, leading to immunosuppression in these areas, which can then lead to fungal or bacterial infection.
18 mg/day or more	If you can, try to use a hematinic supplement or ferritin. These forms are "bioavailable," that is, they are forms that your body will be better able to absorb and metabolize.
400-800 micrograms/day	Do not take at the same time as Vitamin C. Best results have been reported from inorganic selenite.
Dosage listed on the bottle	Spirulina is available in powdered and capsule forms, and is fairly inexpensive. The powdered form can be mixed with foods and juices. Spirulina is deep green in color and has a distinctive flavor.
Dosage listed on the bottle	Cold-aged, odorless extract is available in tablet form. The most promising research has been for cold-aged products with large concentrations of allicin, such as "Garlicin" or "Kwai".

Caution! DO NOT ADD Vitamin D to your Diet. The amount that occurs naturally in your diet is acceptable; however, do not supplement your diet with additional Vitamin D. Studies show that Vit D is immunosuppressant, and *increases* the ability of HIV to multiply.

Nutritional status has been shown to be an important factor in the overall health of HIV+ people. Moreover, vitamins and minerals are among the most important therapies available to people with HIV disease.

Benefits of Nutritional Therapy

- Slower Disease Progression
- Improved Immune Function
- Weight Maintenance
- Increased Tolerance to Drugs like AZT
- **Improved Quality of Life**

With all the evidence presented in favor of nutritional therapy, and its proven benefits, it simply makes sense to have a nutritional plan. Do yourself a favor and learn about the foods, vitamins, and minerals you are consuming, and the effects these have on your body and mind-- nutrition is critical to your health.

Sources

To purchase nutritional supplements, write to the following companies for a catalog, order forms, or more information:

Healing Alternatives Foundation
1748 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-626-2316

Herb's Herbs
3767 Villa Terrace #1
San Diego, CA 92104
800-747-0505

The Vitamin Trader
6501 Fourth Street, NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
800-334-9310

References

- Lark Lands, Ph.D., *Nutritional Supplements and HIV Infection*, Treatment Issues, Volume 6, #9, October 1992
- *Journal of the Megahealth Society*, Volume 6, #26, June 1990

SAFER SEX

What is "Safer Sex"?

"Safer Sex" is any sexual activity that does not involve the exchange of blood, sperm, or vaginal secretions.

Why should I worry about "Safer Sex"?

"Safer Sex" is still important for someone who is HIV-positive, for the following reasons:

- To prevent others from becoming infected with HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.
- To prevent yourself from becoming re-infected with HIV. Becoming re-infected with HIV can do two things:
1) increase the amount of virus in your body; 2) increase the number of different strains of the virus in your body. Both of these will result in an HIV+ person becoming ill much sooner.
- To prevent yourself from becoming infected with other viruses such as Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV), Hepatitis A, B, and C, Epstein Barr Virus (EBV), and Cytomegalovirus (CMV), and diseases such as Syphilis. As with HIV, there are no "cures" for these diseases and they further exhaust your immune system. Infection with these viruses will also result in you becoming ill much sooner.

In most prisons it is illegal to have sex; nevertheless, it is important that information about "safer sex" be made known.

Here are some suggestions to make sex safer:

- Use a condom during anal, vaginal, and oral sexual intercourse.
- Use only water-based lubricants like KY. Oil-based lubricants, like Vaseline or hand cream, can weaken rubber and cause it to break.
- The spermicide Nonoxynol-9 is also effective against HIV. If possible, use a spermicidal gel containing Nonoxynol-9 or lubricated condoms which have been treated with Nonoxynol-9.
- Use a dental dam (latex square) or a sliced condom for oral sex with a woman or for rimming.
- Mutual masturbation. Do not allow another person's sperm to contact any open cuts or sores on your body.

Since you can't tell by looking whether your partner has HIV, the best thing to do is have safer sex. Protect yourself - Safer Sex is important for **everyone**.

RESOURCES

For Prisoners with HIV/AIDS

PWA Prison Project is a national organization that provides educational materials and information for prisoners and correctional facility staff. For a free resource directory write to All Care, Inc., 961 Clark St., suite 304, Denver, CO, 80218.

AIDS & Prisons: The Facts for Inmates and Officers is a booklet that answers the questions most often asked by prisoners and correctional facility staff. Sample copies are free and large orders are inexpensive. Please write to Julie Greenspan, National Prison Project (ACLU), 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 410, Washington, DC, 20009, or call: 202-234-4830, FAX 202-234-4890.

PWA-RAG is a publication written by prisoners with HIV/AIDS. To subscribe, please write to PWA-RAG, Prisoners with AIDS Rights Advocacy Group, PO Box 2161, Jonesboro, GA, 30327, or call 404-946-9346. No collect calls.

Pen Pals is for inmates who would like to correspond with other inmates. Write to Carol Smyth, c/o PWA Coalition, 31 W. 26th St., 5th Floor, New York, NY, 10010.

PWA Coalition Newsline regularly addresses prison issues from a prisoner's perspective. Please write to PWA Coalition Newsletter, 31 W. 26th St., New York, NY, 10010.

The Alliance for Prisoners with AIDS is a prisoners' rights advocacy group. For information, please write to The Alliance for Prisoners with AIDS, 135 W. 15th St., New York, NY, 10003.

Critical Path AIDS Project is an HIV/AIDS treatment information newsletter. Prisoners with HIV/AIDS can receive this newsletter free of charge. Please write to Critical Path AIDS Project, 2026 Lombard St., Philadelphia, PA, 19146.

AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) provides information and educational materials regarding treatment education, public benefits. Please write to the Treatment Education Program or Public Benefits at APLA, 6721 Romaine St., Los Angeles, CA, 90038.

I Heard It Through the Grapevine is a publication on the latest in alternative therapies, with a humorous twist. For a subscription, please write to the Treatment Education Program, c/o APLA, 6721 Romaine St., Los Angeles, CA, 90038.

AIDS Treatment News is a highly recommended bi-weekly publication with the latest in HIV/AIDS treatments. For a free subscription, please send a letter explaining your present situation to AIDS Treatment News, PO Box 411256, San Francisco, CA, 94141.

This booklet was produced by the
Treatment Education Program of AIDS Project Los Angeles.

The goal of APLA's Treatment Education Program is to educate and empower people with HIV disease and their health care providers with up-to-date, bilingual information about approved, experimental, and alternative therapies, in order to improve the quality and sophistication of HIV treatment in every population impacted by this disease.

For additional information, please write to:
Treatment Education Program
AIDS Project Los Angeles
6721 Romaine Street
Los Angeles, CA 90038



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