

NEW JERSEY AIDS/HIV/STD HOTLINE

PRESS RELEASE

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Aging with HIV Infection -HIV is No Longer a Death Sentence-

(Newark, NJ) – Thanks to early diagnosis and effective treatment plans, people living with HIV are healthier and living longer than ever before. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), close to 50% of those living with HIV are over 50 years old. Although this is a celebrated success in our nation’s fight to end AIDS, medical professionals and researchers are now faced with exploring new health challenges for a generation aging with HIV.¹ (CDC,1)

Aging with HIV infection may complicate HIV treatment plans. Despite living longer and healthier while on effective treatment, older adults living with HIV have increased rates of age-related illnesses and conditions such as heart disease, certain cancers, bone fractures, loss of muscle mass, dementia, and kidney disease. Combining HIV medicines with other medicines for age-related conditions may cause serious drug to drug interactions and side effects. If you are experiencing side effects from medicines used to treat HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), contact the healthcare professionals at the [NJ AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline](#) for help, 1-800-624-2377.

Older adults with HIV infection should take precautions to reduce the risk for developing age-related conditions;

- **Don’t Smoke Tobacco** – smoking has many negative health effects. Not only is it known to cause multiple forms of cancer and lung disease, it also increases the risk for heart attacks and strokes.
- **Minimize Alcohol and Drug Use** – abusing drugs and alcohol can make it difficult to follow a daily HIV treatment plan. It also contributes to poor judgement, often leading to high risk behaviors whereby an HIV-positive individual is more likely to spread the HIV virus (sex with multiple partners, not using condoms during sexual encounters, sharing needles, syringes and other injection drug equipment). HIV medicines and recreational drugs can interact poorly, potentially causing dangerous side effects.
- **Diet and Exercise** – maintaining a healthy diet and exercise routine will boost the immune system and minimize the risk of hard to fight infections. Exercise is known to reduce inflammation in the body; some think inflammation may be a factor as to why the aging HIV population is experiencing early onset of many age-related illnesses and conditions.

Along with maintaining a healthy lifestyle, it is important to maintain both an effective HIV treatment plan and an honest and open relationship with HIV care team. Be sure to keep regular HIV care appointments, discuss side effects from HIV medicines, as well as, signs and symptoms of age-

¹ CDC – [HIV Among People Age 50 and Older](#)

related conditions with your HIV care team. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you are finding it hard to take your HIV medicines every day. Skipping doses or starting and stopping HIV medicines can cause serious health consequences which can limit future treatment options.

New Jersey offers free HIV and other STIs services to all state residents via the NJ AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline. Knowing who to call for resources and information is the first step in ending the HIV epidemic in New Jersey. The hotline is staffed by health professionals (doctors, nurses, and pharmacists) available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide free, confidential help via phone at 1-800-624-2377, text/email at 8006242377@njpies.org, or [chat here](#)

- Referrals for testing sites and other related services
- HIV, STI and hepatitis prevention and treatment information
- Side effects from medicines used to treat HIV and other STIs
- Referrals to PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) services
- Counseling and treatment locations
- Partner notification
- ADDP

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New Jersey AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline

Healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and pharmacists) provide telephone consultation for people seeking information about HIV/AIDS, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and other sexually transmitted diseases including hepatitis. Callers receive information tailored to their needs; discussion about prevention, referrals for testing sites and other related services, counseling and testing locations, and information on treatment and adverse reactions to medications. The hotline is administered by the New Jersey Poison Control Center and funded by the New Jersey Department of Health, Division of HIV, STD, and TB services.

About Rutgers

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