

VADEMECUM FOR HIV PATIENTS

ADDENDUM #5

LIFE STYLE INTERVENTIONS

Good nutrition, weight maintenance, exercise are extremely important for people living with HIV/AIDS. The vitamins, nutrients and energy that nutritious foods provide can help stave off illness. Maintaining weight and preventing the loss of muscle mass (called lean body mass) bolsters general health and the body's to fight disease. Moreover, *Active lifestyle* is fundamental to prevent and treat obesity, hypertension and diabetes.

Here we focus on some ‘tips’ for a *general healthy lifestyle*.

Smoking

Need to stop smoking.

Reasons:

- Positive short-term aspects (more money for better things, better taste for food, better skin, less dyspnoea).
- Long-term benefits (prevention of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, ischemic heart disease, stroke, lung cancer).

Helping tools:

- Use nicotine substitution (patch, chewing gum, spray), varenicline, or bupropion (note: both drugs may cause central nervous system side effects including suicide; bupropion may interact with some HIV drugs).
- Consider referring to specialized stop smoking clinics.

Dietary

General tips:

- Keep caloric intake balanced with energy expenditure.
- Limit intake of saturated fat, cholesterol and refined carbohydrates.
- Intake of alcohol should be restricted to <20-40g/day.
- Reduce total fat intake to < 30% and dietary cholesterol to <300mg/day.
- Consider intake of vegetables, fruits and grain products with fibre.
- Consider consumption of fish, poultry (without skin) and lean meat.
- Avoid binge eating (‘yo-yo dieting’).

If necessary, consider ‘one week food and drink diary’ to discover ‘hidden’ calories.

Dietary intervention should not interfere with the dietary requirements required for appropriate absorption of antiretroviral drugs.

In presence of HIV-related wasting and dyslipidaemia consider referral to dietician.

If obviously overweight, a person should to lose weight. Starvation diets are not recommended

(immune defence mechanisms potentially decreased).

If appropriate, also for simple counselling, consider referring to dietician.

Exercise

Again: *active lifestyle* is fundamental to prevent and treat obesity, hypertension and diabetes.

First simple step: consider *self-directed moderate level physical activity* (take the stairs, cycle or walk to work, cycling, swimming, hiking etc.).

Moreover, it is recommended *regular moderate-intensity exercise* rather than vigorous exercise, with the aim of achieving cardiovascular fitness (e.g. 30 minutes brisk walking > 5 days a week) and maintaining muscular strength and joint flexibility.

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