

Tequesta Family Practice

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AIDS Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Diagnosis;

Positive test for the human immunodeficiency virus

Onset may be sudden or insidious or may present first as an opportunistic infection such as thrush (oral candidiasis) or *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia

Sudden onset (duration of up to fourteen days) of fevers, sweats, malaise, fatigability, joint and muscle pain, headaches, sore throat, diarrhea, generalized swelling of lymph glands, and/or rash on the trunk

Insidious onset may present as unexplained progressive fatigue, weight loss, fever, diarrhea, and/or generalized swelling of the lymph glands

Advanced stages will show neurological changes, including dementia and loss of nerve function (e.g., partial paralysis, vertigo, visual disturbances, etc.)

QUICK REVIEW

- Primary risk factors: sexual contact with an HIV infected person, intravenous drug use involving needle sharing, or being born to a mother who has HIV
- HIV itself does not kill; what it does is cripple the human system to such an extent that a person dies from severe infection or cancer.

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection plays a major role in the progression to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), but other factors, particularly nutritional status, lifestyle, and mental/emotional state, also play a significant role.

- At this time, we recommend that conventional therapies be used in all individuals with CD4 counts below 500.

Malnutrition and/or nutrient deficiency is too common in HIV/AIDS patients, given the very strong association between nutritional status, immune function, and the progression from HIV to AIDS.

In general, since the immune system is dependent on many nutrients, it is vitally important to supply optimum levels of all nutrients to patients with HIV/AIDS.

- Numerous studies have shown that individuals infected with HIV have a compromised antioxidant defense system.

Of all the antioxidants that show promise in slowing the progression of HIV to AIDS, vitamin E shows the greatest and most consistent effects. In a few clinical studies, supplemental beta-carotene has produced positive effects on immune function, both in HIV positive and AIDS patients. Several studies have shown that selenium status is a major determinant of how fast HIV will progress to AIDS. Vitamin B12 deficiency is seen in ten to thirty-five percent of all HIV-positive patients, presumably as a result of either decreased intake, reduced absorption, or antagonism by the drug AZT.

Lipoic acid is demonstrating extremely encouraging results in treating HIV patients.

- Preliminary studies indicate that carnitine supplementation can improve immune function and reduce the level of HIV-induced immune suppression.
 - Curcumin exhibits potent anti-HIV activity and is showing promise in clinical trials.
- Bromelain has been shown to have better activity than known anti-HIV drugs in test tube studies.
- In clinical studies in Japan, licorice components have shown tremendous benefits in treating HIV

TREATMENT SUMMARY

The goal of treatment for HIV-positive individuals is to slow the progression of HIV to AIDS. This is accomplished by optimizing nutritional status, following a health-promoting lifestyle, and employing measures to enhance immune function. Particularly important are antioxidants such as vitamin E, beta-carotene, zinc, selenium, vitamin C, lipoic acid, and curcumin. In addition, vitamin B12, carnitine, licorice, and bromelain appear to offer some benefit.

In cases of AIDS the treatment goal shifts to supporting conventional therapies. It is particularly important to strive to maintain high nutritional and antioxidant status.

General Recommendations for Prevention

- Do not have sexual intercourse with persons known to have or suspected of having HIV or who use intravenous drugs
- Practice safe sex-use a condom and avoid exchange of bodily fluids
- Do not share a toothbrush, razor, or other implement that could become contaminated with blood from someone with an HIV infection

Lifestyle

- Perform a relaxation exercise (deep breathing, meditation, prayer, visualization, etc.) for ten to fifteen minutes each day
- Get regular exercise (non-strenuous walking, Tai Chi, stretching, etc.)

Diet

- Consume a diet that focuses on whole, unprocessed foods (whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds)
- Consume adequate protein (consider supplementation with a high-quality whey protein at a dosage of 1 gram per 2 pounds of body weight)
- Eliminate the intake of alcohol, caffeine, and sugar
- Identify and control food allergies
- Drink at least 48 ounces of water per day

Nutritional Supplements

Vitamin C 50-200 grams/d (Beware Herxheimer Rxn), caution if G6PD deficiency/Sickle Cell, Tooth enamel may be damaged- use a straw if solutions used

Vitamin C Paste for HSV Lesions

- High-potency multiple-vitamin-and mineral
- Flaxseed oil: 1 tbsp per day
- Vitamin C: 500-1,000 mg three times per day
- Vitamin E: 400-800 IU per day
- Carotene complex: 50,000-100,000 per day
- Methylcobalamin (active vitamin B12): 2 mg twice per day
- Lipoic acid: 150 mg three times per day
- Thymus extract: 750 mg of the crude polypeptide fraction per day

Selenium

Zinc

Botanical Medicines

- Curcumin (from Curcuma Tonga): 2,000 mg per day in divided doses (e.g., 400 mg five times per day) with an equal amount of bromelain (1,200-1,800 mcu [milk-clotting units]), preferably on an empty stomach

Glycyrrhiza glabra (licorice):

Powdered root: 1-2 g three times per day

Fluid extract (1:1): 2-4 ml three times per day

Solid (dry powdered) extract (5% glycyrrhetic acid content): 250-500 mg three times per day

(NOTE: If licorice is to be used over a long period of time, it is necessary to increase intake of potassium-rich foods.)