

Pocket size

ART and quality of life:

side effects and long-term health

December 2015

This leaflet
is about
ART and side
effects...

and about
long-term
quality of life.



Web links are for
more information.

HIV treatment (ART)
uses very effective
drugs with a low risk of
side effects.

You and your doctor
can choose and modify
ART so that you have
the best quality of life.

Side effects, if they
occur, are usually mild.
It is easy to change to
other meds that might
be easier to take.

Everyone worries about side effects before starting...



- Most people either have no side effects or only have mild side effects that reduce within a few weeks.
- Choose ART that is most likely to fit your lifestyle.
- If you are unlucky and have trouble, it is easy to switch meds until the combination is right.



i-base.info/ART

Key side effects

Rash: Always tell your doctor.

Mood changes, being anxious, not sleeping well: possible with all meds but especially efavirenz (also in Atripla).

Diarrhoea, fatigue and nausea: possible with all but now less common; diarrhoea is more reported with protease inhibitors.

Changes to kidney and liver function, cholesterol, etc: Possible with all meds but will be checked by routine tests.

If side effects continue with one drug you can usually switch to another.



i-base.info/switching

**If you currently
have side effects
there are lots of
things you can do
that might help.**

Take a list of things to talk
about in your next clinic visit.

Talk about every side effect at
every visit. Talk to the people
you feel most confident with.

**If you have had a problem for a
while, don't just put up with it.**

People involved in your care
can only help if they know
you are having trouble.

talk

...to your doctor,
nurse, pharmacist,
GP & health worker.

Ask if you need
more support so
your clinic can help.

Call i-Base to speak
to an advocate.



i-base.info/talk

keep a side effect

DIARY

A diary of your symptoms will help your doctor understand and take your problems seriously.

It might also help you know if things are getting better.

- When and how often?
- How long do they last?
- How mild or severe?
- How is your daily life affected?

Day

Time

Notes

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Use larger pages to record as many details as possible.



i-base.info/diary

HIV and quality of life (QoL)



Good advice about lifestyle changes is just as important if you are HIV positive.

It includes looking after your heart and bones, your sexual health and your mental health.

The online resource also covers health issues other than side effects that are important as we grow older.

Looking after your health will help your quality of life whatever your age.



i-base.info/QoL

exercise

- Being active is good for your mental and physical health.

diet

- Eat a healthy balanced diet that includes vegetables. Go easy on salt, sugar, red meat, high fat and fried food.

sleep and rest

- Good sleep is essential.
- Alcohol and drug use is better in moderation.
- For HIV+ smokers, quitting is the single biggest way to improve your health.

More info...

The i-Base website has over 50 web pages on side effects and other health issues that are also available as a booklet.

It includes information on:

- Talking to your doctor.
- Individual side effects.
- Quality of life.
- Other complications.

i-base.info/side-effects

Information is all online or you can order the free booklet.



i-base.info/order

The more detailed information includes these side effects and other health issues.



Diarrhoea.
Feeling sick (nausea).
Feeling tired (fatigue).
Not sleeping well (insomnia).
Neuropathy (numb fingers and toes).
Mental health.
Sexual health.
Fat loss, body changes & diabetes.
Liver, kidney and heart monitoring.
Skin, nail and hair problems.
HIV and cancer.
Bone health.



i-base.info/side-effects

Notes for next clinic visit

Taking a list of things you want to talk about will make the most of the time you have to see your doctor.

**For the free full booklet
please call 020 7407
8488 or order online.**

**We can answer
questions by phone**



0808 800 6013

or by email or online

Please give us feedback

surveymonkey.com/r/5J97ZN8

More than 350 full references:

www.i-base.info/references

i-Base, 57 Great Suffolk St, SE1 0BB.

More pages >>>

“...after 22 years, I still take a list of things to discuss with my doctor.”

“Speaking to others gave me confidence to change from efavirenz.”

“... in the end, HIV meds were so much easier than I thought they would be...”

“...tell your doctor about drugs and supplements in case they interact with ART.”



i-base.info/quotes