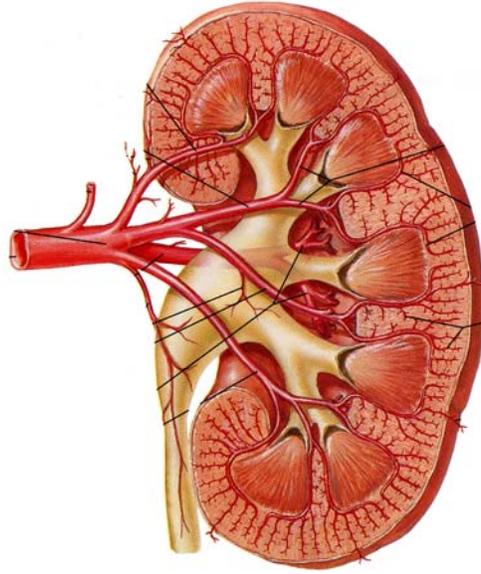


Treatment Topic of the Month **September 2007**

KNOW YOUR KIDNEYS WELL! **A Holistic Treatment Guide**



Disclaimer

The Treatment Resources Program at the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation provides information and resources to empower people living with HIV/AIDS to be proactive around their health by working in partnership with their health providers. We do not recommend or promote any treatment in particular. We strongly urge those interested in any specific treatment to consult a wide range of resources including a qualified medical and/or complementary therapy practitioner who has experience working with HIV+ patients.

For treatment information and resources,
Contact Rebecca at 416-506-1400 x627 or by e-mail at
rgower@pwatoronto.org

Know Your Kidneys Well!

Why Are Kidneys Important?

The kidneys are made up of two small bean shaped organs located below the ribs around the middle of the back. Along with the liver, the kidneys play an important role in detoxifying the body by filtering the blood and removing waste products through the breakdown of body tissue and food. They also regulate the body's balance of minerals and water, especially sodium and potassium, as well as convert Vitamin D into its active form which plays an important role in healthy bones.

Kidney Problems & HIV

Kidney disease can affect almost anyone. Some common causes include inflammation in the filter within the kidney, high blood pressure and diabetes. Kidney problems may result from side effects of HAART, and HIV itself can cause glomerulonephritis (inflammation of the kidneys). The most common types of kidney problems experienced by PHAs are kidney stones and HIV Associated Nephropathy (HIVAN). Although we are seeing fewer instances of HIVAN because of HAART, various types of kidney problems are occurring because HIV+ people with access to ARV therapy are living for longer. For example, kidney problems induced by drug toxicities in HIV+ people can result from the use of anti-HIV drugs, from drugs used to treat opportunistic infections (i.e. Septra) or from recreational drugs such as cocaine.

Who is at Risk for Kidney Disease?

Some people are more likely to develop kidney disease in addition to risk factors of HIV medications and/or HIV itself. You may be at greater risk if you;

Are of African ancestry
Have a lower CD4 count
Have hepatitis B or C

Are older
Have high blood pressure

Have Diabetes
Have a higher viral load

Signs & Symptoms?

Symptoms of kidney problems can include severe pain in the lower back and sides, difficult and painful urination, blood in the urine or the inability to urinate. There may also be brown/red discoloration or frothy urine. Symptoms of more advanced kidney failure may include fatigue, tiredness, nausea, headaches, muscle cramps, drowsiness and eventually darkening of the skin. The best way to track the health of your kidneys is through a doctor performing some specific tests. A urine test can check levels of protein, sugar, ketones, blood, nitrites as well as red and white blood cells. **The Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN)** measures the amount of nitrogen in the blood that is normally removed by the kidneys. High nitrates can be due to a high-protein diet, dehydration or kidney or heart failure. Doctors may also measure creatinine levels in the blood. **Creatinine** is created when muscle breaks down and high levels are usually due to kidney problems.

**Adapted from [A Practical Guide to HIV Drug Side Effects/Kidney Stones](#) by CATIE, [HIV & Kidney Disease](#) by AIDSinfonet and [The Kidneys](#), by AIDSmap.*

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HIV Medications and The Kidney:

Kidney problems can occur because of certain risk factors including HIV itself as well as from certain HIV medications (HAART). Many HIV medications are detoxified by the liver. There are certain HIV medications that are detoxified by the kidney which may increase the possibility of experiencing side effects that focus on the kidney. It is important to remember that the development of kidney disease may not only occur with the medications that are highlighted below.

Crixivan (Indinavir)

Indinavir is a Protease Inhibitor that is used as part of Highly Active Anti- Retroviral Therapy (HAART) often in combination with Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors ("Nukes" or NRTIs). One of the most serious side effects of Indinavir is kidney stones. It also has the potential of causing other side effects such as serious anemia, an upset stomach, bloating and skin rash. It has also been known to cause 'frozen shoulder' or adhesive capsulitis which causes a reduced range of motion and pain in the shoulder.

Indinavir can also interact with other drugs and supplements. This is a problem because it can change the amount of the drug in your system by causing either an overdose or an underdose. Medical drugs to avoid include other HIV medications, drugs used to treat Tuberculosis such as rifampin or rifabutin, Viagra and other drugs used to treat erectile dysfunction and medicine used for migraine headaches. Furthermore, the herb St. John's Wort, which many PHAs use to address mild to moderate depression, lowers the blood levels of some Protease Inhibitors. Grapefruit juice also reduces levels of Indinavir in the blood.

Tenofovir (Viread)

Tenofovir is a Nucleotide Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor which is also known as a 'nuke' or a NRTI. It is often used in combination with other medications as part of Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy (HAART). Tenofovir can cause many side effects such as nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite similar to many other HIV medications. One unique aspect about this medication is that it can increase creatinine and transaminase levels. High levels of these enzymes can indicate damage to the kidneys and the liver. This is thought to occur because Tenofovir is eliminated (and detoxified) by the kidneys and not the liver. It does not seem to interact with as many other medications as is the case with Crixivan. However, it does interact with a few other HIV medications which include didanosine (Videx), atazanavir (Reyataz) and Kaletra (lopinavir/ritonavir).

Homeopathy and Kidney Disease:

It is important to consult a qualified and trained Homeopathic Physician in the treatment of acute and chronic conditions. Please do not attempt to treat yourself.

Homeopathy is the second most popular form of medicine practiced worldwide. It is a naturally-based form of medicine that targets the underlying cause of disease by assisting the natural tendency of the body to heal itself. Homeopathy uses specially prepared remedies which are chosen based on the 'Law of Similars'. This philosophy states that a given substance will cure in diseased person the same symptoms which it causes in a healthy person.

Kidney disease can be caused by many factors. In many cases, it is the result of an imbalance of the immunological system which produces disturbances at the level of the kidneys. Since Homeopathic physicians assess the patient as a whole person, there are no specific remedies for kidney disease.

Dr. K.R. Mansoor Ali has presented research on the effectiveness of Homeopathy on different manifestations of kidney disease. His conclusions are;

- Homeopathy is very effective in all stages and variants of kidney disease.
- It may be taken along with other medications
- It helps to reduce (and eventually to stop) the dose of conventional medicines for kidney disease. It helps arrest further progress of disease and hence deterioration caused by disease.
- If administered at an early stage, it prevents complications like renal failure associated with disease thus minimizing need of dialysis or transplant.
- Even if the patient is undergoing dialysis, it will help to reduce frequency and in certain cases abolishes need of dialysis.
- It is absolutely safe, harmless, and non-toxic. It does not interfere with other medicines

Important Homeopathic Medicines in Chronic Kidney Disease

AMMONIUM CARBONICUM

ARSENICUM ALBUM

AURUM METALLICUM

CICUTA

CUPRUM METALLICUM

CUPRUM ARSENICUM

GLONOINE

OPIUM

PHOSPHORUS

PICRIC ACID

PLATINA

TEREBINTHINA

Traditional Chinese Medicine and Kidney Disease:

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) was developed in China over 2000 years ago. TCM consists of acupuncture, herbal therapy and tuina (massage and manipulation involving acupressure). Essentially Chinese Medicine is an energy therapy in which the body's life force (qi) has a very close relationship with blood and controls the body's mechanisms of homeostasis, immunity and energy flow. Qi is connected through a series of networks called meridians. In this philosophy, health encompasses the whole body as well as the mind and emotions.

Acupuncture:

HIV+ people have been using acupuncture to enhance the immune system, reduce pain, to minimize side effects of HIV medications and to manage HIV-related disorders such as opportunistic infections since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Based on a specific Chinese Medical diagnosis, acupuncture can assist with the treatment of many symptoms associated with HIV/AIDS including various forms of kidney disease. A practitioner will assess the health of kidney. Symptoms of kidney deficiency can include frequent urination, fatigue, low back pain, no ovulation, lack of desire for sex, lack of will power, and dark circles under the eyes.

Chinese Herbs:

TCM Doctors often use Chinese Herbs in conjunction with acupuncture and dietary changes. Some of the following herbs can be used to address kidney problems. ***Most Chinese herbs are not meant to be over-the-counter remedies. It is important to choose a well-trained and qualified professional who can diagnose you accurately and treat you effectively.***

Astragalus (huang qi):

This is the dried root of a perennial plant called *Astragalus membranaceus*. It is a tonic which impacts the immune system by increasing energy and reducing the effects of chronic infection. Its main uses are the prevention of viral infections especially colds and influenza, in the treatment of chronic kidney inflammation (nephritis), to decrease edema and protein in the urine (proteinuria).

Schizandra (wu wei zi)

This is the ripe fruit from *Schizandra sinensis*. It is used as a warm, astringent tonic in traditional Chinese Medicine. It is also used as a tonic for the lungs and the kidneys to treat edema, sweating and chronic diarrhea.

Deer Antler (lu rong)

This herb is used as a tonic for the kidneys and is used to address symptoms of kidney deficiencies such as fatigue; impotence; frequent, clear and copious urination; and lightheadedness. It also regulates the heart beat and increases blood pressure. Too large doses can have the opposite effect by lowering the blood pressure.

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Information adapted from The HIV Wellness Sourcebook by Misha Ruth Cohen and Healing HIV by Jon Kaiser, MD.

Wellness Resource Guide

Health Promotion Services at PWA:

Contact Rebecca, Treatment Resources Coordinator for;

- Student Massage Clinic
- Holistic Treatment Counselling
- Community Naturopathic Clinic for People with HIV
- Harm Reduction

Contact Kevin, Programs Coordinator for;

- Volunteer Massage Program
- Reiki
- Therapeutic Touch

Contact Greg, Speakers Bureau Coordinator for;

- The Energy Healing Circle

Contact Llewellyn, Treatment Access Coordinator for;

- Trillium
- Compassion Access to Medications (H-MAP)

Treatment Websites:

CATIE

www.catie.ca

The Body

www.thebody.com

AIDSInfonet (New Mexico AIDS Project)

www.aidsinfonet.org

AIDS Map

www.aidsmap.org

AIDS Treatment News

www.aidsnews.org

HIV/AIDS Medications

www.aidsmeds.com

Multilingual HIV Treatment Information

www.treathivglobally.ca

The Well Project (geared towards women)

www.thewellproject.org

Project Inform

www.projectinform.org

Nutrition:

Jon Kaiser [Immune Power: The Comprehensive Healing Program for HIV](#)

Jon Kaiser www.jonkaiser.com

Lark Lands www.larklands.net

CATIE [A Practical Guide to Nutrition for People Living with HIV](#)

Complementary Therapies:

CATIE

[Practical Guide to Complementary Therapies](#)

Complementary Therapists List

www.actoronto.org

Homeopathy

http://www.csoh.ca/Homeopathy_Introduction.htm

Traditional Chinese Medicine

www.docmisha.com

Nutrition Services:

www.stmichaelshospital.com/programs/nutrition

Community Naturopathic Clinic

416-324-4187 (to book an appointment)

Community Resources:

Toronto People With AIDS Foundation

www.pwatoronto.org

VOICES of Positive Women

www.vopw.org

Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention

www.black-cap.com

Asian Community AIDS Services

www.acas.org

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention

www.asaap.ca