

Patient Help Sheet

human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.” - Oscar Wilde

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HIV, or Human Immunodeficiency Virus, affects about 1.2 million people in the United States. If left untreated, HIV can become the disease AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). HIV is treated with medication called antiretroviral therapy, which can greatly prolong a patient's life and keep him/her healthy and active. Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine can be a great complementary treatment for patients suffering from HIV. Clinical research has shown acupuncture may be effective at reducing HIV-related pain and neuropathy, Burning-mouth syndrome and improving the quality of life for patients living with HIV, as well as reducing AIDS-related symptoms.



Acupressure

Stomach 36 Located on the lateral side of the shin, one finger-width lateral to the shin bone, and four finger widths down from the eyes of the knee. This point is an excellent point for nourishing Qi and blood to keep your body strong. It also supports the digestive system, which can often suffer from HIV medications. This point has also been shown to boost immune function.

Spleen 6 Located on the medial side of the lower leg, four finger widths up from the medial malleolus (ankle bone), on the border of the tibia. Spleen 6 works in conjunction with Stomach 36 to strengthen Qi, blood and boost digestive function. It also nourishes the body's yin energy.

Large Intestine 4 Located on the back of the hand, in the space between the thumb and pointer finger, next to the midpoint of the second metacarpal bone. This is a powerhouse point that has been shown in clinical trials to boost immune function. It helps the body to fight off a pathogen, and clears toxic heat that can build up in the system over time.

Diet

It is important to eat foods nourishing and strengthening to the digestive system. Not only because digestion often suffers from HIV medication, but also because our digestion is our first line of energy. This system is called the spleen in Traditional Chinese Medicine. If we nourish the spleen, then it can better nourish all the other systems in the body, including our immune function and ability to fight off infection. In general, eat warm, cooked foods whenever possible and stay away from raw and



cold foods. If eating raw food is unavoidable, try to pair the food with a cup of herbal tea. Ginger tea and mint tea are particularly good at calming any digestive upset from food. Whole grains, yams, pumpkin, carrots, dark leafy greens, tuna, mackerel, chicken, beef, molasses and dates are all nourishing to the spleen.

Exercise

It is very important to maintain a regular exercise routine when you have HIV. This helps to keep the body's Qi and blood moving in a healthy way through the body, and protects the heart. Exercise can help to alleviate both physical and mental stress, which in turn makes our body less susceptible to getting sick. Depending on your comfort level, try gentle exercise like yoga or tai chi, or more vigorous exercise like running, lifting or swimming. Most importantly, just keep moving!

Sources

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