

HIV medicines and seniors - HIV medicines, part 8



About 1 in every 4 persons living with HIV in the United States is over 55. Treatment with HIV medicines called antiretroviral therapy or ART is important for everyone with HIV. Life-long treatment with HIV medicines helps older adults with HIV to live longer, healthier lives.

HIV treatment advice is the same for older and younger adults. However, age-related issues can affect HIV treatment in older adults.

The liver and kidneys don't work as well when people get older. This can make it harder for the body to use HIV medicines and it increases the risk of side effects. Older adults with HIV may have other conditions such as diabetes or heart disease.

In addition, HIV may affect how the body ages. HIV increases the risk of age-related conditions such as dementia and some cancers.

Taking medicines for HIV and medicines for other conditions at the same time may increase the risk of the drugs reacting with each other. This is called a drug-drug interaction. It can also increase medicine side effects.



Once ART is started, the immune system may not recover as well or as quickly for older adults as it does for younger people.



Despite these issues, medication adherence is better among older adults than younger ones. Medication adherence means taking HIV medicines every day and exactly as prescribed.

Be sure to get answers to any questions you have about HIV/AIDS. Your public health department, health care provider, and public library can help.