

## Preventing Opportunistic Infections - Living with HIV, part 7

Opportunistic infections, or OIs, are infections that occur more often and are more severe in people with weak immune systems. This includes people with HIV.

The best ways to prevent OIs are to get regular check-ups and to take your HIV medications as prescribed. Your doctor may also prescribe other medications to prevent certain OIs.

By staying on HIV medications, you can keep the amount of HIV in your body as low as possible. This will help keep your immune system healthy.



In addition to taking HIV medications, there are other steps you can take to keep your immune system strong to help prevent OIs.

- Use condoms consistently and correctly to prevent sexually transmitted infections.
- Don't share drug injection equipment. Blood infected with hepatitis C can remain in syringes and needles.
- Get vaccinated. Your doctor can tell you what vaccines you need.
- Understand what germs you are exposed to and limit your exposure to them. This includes infections such as tuberculosis or germs found in the stools, saliva, or on the skin of animals.



- Don't eat certain foods. This includes undercooked eggs, unpasteurized raw milk and cheeses, unpasteurized fruit juices, and raw seed sprouts.
- Don't drink untreated water taken directly from lakes or rivers. Tap water in foreign countries is also often not safe. Use bottled water or water filters.
- Ask your doctor about your activities at work, at home, and on vacation to make sure you aren't increasing your risk of getting an OI.

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.

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