Two Therapies for Belly Fat

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Two experimental therapies may ease a big HIV-related bellyache: excess deep belly fat or visceral adipose tissue (VAT), a form of lipodystrophy.

Approaching the FDA-approval finish line (it's in Phase III trials) is **tesamorelin**, which triggers the production of human growth hormone. Tesamorelin injections seem to reduce VAT with fewer side effects than Serostim—another drug boosting growth hormone—once seen as a lead contender for repairing lipo damage.

Twice-a-day injections of synthetic **leptin** also successfully reduced deep belly fat in men with HIV, but this compound is just beginning to wend its way through clinical trials. The hormone leptin helps regulate appetite and fat storage in your body. In a small study, it reduced VAT by 32 percent—much more than Serostim and tesamorelin have done in trials. Leptin shots also helped control cholesterol and blood sugars. Three leptin and HIV trials are now ongoing (For more information, visit clinicaltrials.gov).

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