# For a Tip-Top Ticker

October 1, 2008 By Laura Whitehorn

HIV-positive people's risk for cardio-vascular disease (CVD) can be 70 to 80 percent higher than that of negative people. How to keep our hearts healthy? Steven Grinspoon, MD, a CVD and HIV researcher at Harvard Medical School in Boston, advises positive people and their health care teams to take CVD risk seriously. This means regularly monitoring blood-fat and sugar levels and scrutinizing belly-fat accumulation. If any of these health indicators expands beyond the norm, remedies are available.

Now, there may also be an easier and more reliable way for your doctor or nurse to check your risk of one form of CVD, atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in the arteries): by comparing a blood pressure reading (with a cuff) in the arm with one taken in the foot or ankle. Two recent studies suggest that this measurement—called ankle-brachial index—may be a valuable part of screening for CVD risk in people with HIV as well as their negative peers.

**Want a simple way to reduce your CVD risk factor? Quit smoking. Cigarettes are the single most serious threat to HIV heart health.**

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/cardio-vascular-disease-HIV-15309-9878