Dousing the Flames

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You know how bad you feel when you're getting a cold? Achy, feverish, tired…just plain lousy. That's your immune system at work, fighting infection. It's all good if that reaction—a.k.a. inflammation or immune activation—stops when the infection is beaten or has run its course. But if inflammation continues, it can upset your body's normal functioning.

Tests show that inflammation persists with HIV (even when the virus is undetectable). And the inflammation can be harmful. For example, it seems inflammation is partly responsible for the increased risk of heart disease, cancers and bone loss HIV-positive people experience.

So it's good news that researchers are testing drugs to calm the inflammatory response generated by HIV. One that seems to work is a drug called Plaquenil (hydroxychloroquine). It's already approved to treat malaria and the autoimmune diseases lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. Next stop perhaps: HIV.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/inflammtion--immune-HIV-20345-6907