Keys to a Long Life

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Aside from adhering well to combination HIV treatment, there are other things you can do to ensure that you live a long and healthy life with the virus:

Quit smoking. People on anti-retroviral treatment lose more years of life to smoking than to HIV.

Treat hepatitis B and C. Treatment is available for hep B, and hep C can usually be cured in just eight to 12 weeks with the new crop of treatments for that virus. Leaving a coinfection with either virus unchecked can compromise the health of people living with HIV, especially when it comes to their liver.

Maintain a healthy diet, and exercise. People with HIV have an increased risk of heart disease. The Mediterranean diet (which favors olive oil and is rich in nuts, beans, fresh veggies, fruits, whole grains and lean meats, such as fish and chicken) has been shown to reduce such a risk in the general population. Stay healthy by getting at least 30 minutes of light to moderate cardiovascular exercise five times each week. Find activities you enjoy, as that will help you stick to a routine.

Get treatment for substance abuse. Abusing recreational drugs or alcohol can also reduce your life span.

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