



The AMIDACARE View



in this issue

**Heart
Health**

ASTHMA & HIV

**Delicious
Recipes
Relapse**



Dear Amida Care Members,

With winter fading and spring quickly approaching, I'm feeling excited about the return of green leaves, colorful flowers and being outdoors. Spring is a great time to: stretch, think about life, question if past choices are still right (for me now), explore opportunities to learn/grow, and celebrate successes since the last tulip garden.

If you take some time to answer these questions, you're sure to see that life is full of challenges. Some we can tackle easily, others are totally beyond our control, but the great majority of these challenges – we can face them head on. And as members remind us in this issue of Amida Care View – we don't have to do it all alone!



While you may have serious health issues, you can create strategies to manage a disease/s so you can live a full and long life. Read this issue to learn more about: 1) preventing heart disease, 2) how to quit smoking, 3) reducing harm to your body from alcohol/drugs, 4) preventing relapse, 5) getting care and support after release from prison or jail, 6) controlling asthma, 7) protecting yourself and your family from violence, 8) reducing stress and anxiety, cooking healthy and affordable meals, 9) how to get a

new Amida Care ID Card, and 10) how to RSVP for an up-coming LIVE YOUR LIFE event.

You and your Primary Care Provider lead your "chosen" team of health care professionals so you can stay on top of any health, mental health or life situations like housing or managing money/benefits.

I've seen firsthand how so many members are committed to their health. Many of you have done what was needed to move from "surviving" to "growing, living and thriving." Like spring, you have the power to dream big, act in your best interest, express your voice, use your personal power to heal, and as Fantei teaches (page 6) to love yourself first (and then others too).

So today, I'm inviting you to ask yourself: "What is my plan to live a full and long life?" Your answer will likely require you to make some changes, or even tough choices, in order to change your life for the better. And if you choose to give up a bad habit (relationship, substance, situation or way of thinking), remember to put a healthier habit in its place.

Some options explored here include: walking, eating healthier, learning a new skill, reading more, dancing, laughing or making art/jewelry. What are you willing to do to live your fullest and longest life?

Amida Care is your partner in life. We know that you're a person, not a Medicaid number, and you're not defined by any disease. Health is not solely

defined by what is happening in your body. Well-being includes how you feel (emotional health) about yourself and your life experiences. At Amida Care, you have an opportunity to learn and grow with others -- and you have the power to positively influence others.

Our Member Advisory Board (MAC) wants you to check out a Live Your Life event such as: healthy cooking classes, salsa and African dance, meditation, yoga, art-making workshops, aromatherapy, among others. Come to our Life Celebration Parties – see photos from Winter 2012 on pages 10-11 and stay tuned for our upcoming summer event.

Yours truly,

Doug Wirth

President & CEO

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Keep Your Ticker Tocking



As if living with HIV isn't enough, it's becoming increasingly clear that HIV-positive people have a higher risk of heart disease. Fortunately, there are many things you can do to keep your heart healthy. Sean Hosein and Debbie Koenig chime in.

A few years back, 12 years after being diagnosed with HIV, Abel suffered a heart attack. He was 70 years old. Abel smoked, he did not exercise, and he loved his steak, burgers and fries.

Jean-Claude, 37, also suffered a massive heart attack. He had started anti-HIV therapy three years earlier and his doctor was perplexed: Jean-Claude didn't smoke, he wasn't overweight or physically inactive, he didn't have high blood pressure and he had no family history of heart disease. In short, he had no risk factors for heart disease.

While people like Jean-Claude can, and sometimes do, develop heart disease, the vast majority of people living with HIV/AIDS (PWA/HIV) who have a heart attack or some other kind of heart trouble also have traditional risk factors for cardiovascular disease. In other words, cardiologists are far more

What is Heart Disease?

Think of your heart as a pump that moves blood through blood vessels to different parts of your body. Heart disease includes a long list of conditions that affect your heart and/or blood vessels, such as heart attack, stroke, aneurysm (the ballooning of a blood vessel) and angina (when an artery that supplies blood to the heart becomes narrowed or blocked and can no longer deliver the blood and oxygen your heart needs).

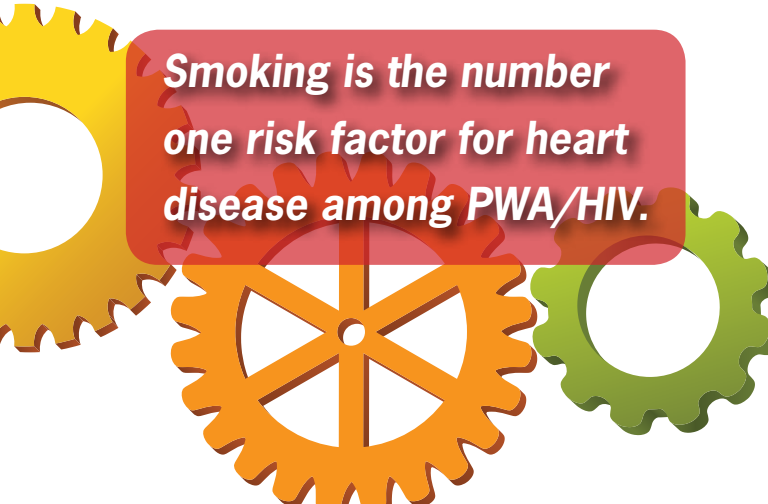
accustomed to seeing people whose life situations resemble Abel's rather than Jean-Claude's. The upside is that there is much you can do to lower your risk.

Risk factors for heart disease.

Although you may not associate having HIV with heart disease and you may think of heart trouble as something that affects only older people, new research suggests that people with HIV, including relatively young people, are at greater risk than the general population. So, regular monitoring of your heart health should be part of your plan for living longer and living well.

During the first two decades of the HIV epidemic, doctors focused on preventing and treating life-threatening infections. However, now that more effective antiretroviral therapy (ART) is widely available in countries like Canada and the USA, deaths from life-threatening infections are uncommon here. As a result, HIV-positive people are living much longer, and as they get older, they become more vulnerable to diseases that can come with aging—including heart disease.

Another factor that's making heart disease more common among PWA/HIV is the inflammation that occurs as a result of HIV infection, especially if HIV goes untreated. This happens because HIV can cause the immune system to be in a continuous state of inflammation. This inflammation damages the immune system, increases the risk of heart disease and harms other internal organs. It also accelerates the aging of blood vessels.



Smoking is the number one risk factor for heart disease among PWA/HIV.

Taking ART can greatly decrease HIV-related inflammation. Indeed, studies have found that people who stop taking ART have a greatly increased risk for heart attacks and stroke. However, even when a person has a low or undetectable viral load, low-level inflammation triggered by HIV may heighten their risk for heart disease.

At the same time, some of the medicines used to treat HIV can raise lipid levels—fatty substances in the blood, such as cholesterol and triglycerides—

which increase a person's risk for heart disease. This is why it's crucial that your doctor monitor your lipid levels regularly. Many HIV positive people who use these medicines take other steps to ensure that their lipid levels stay as low as possible.

Smoking is the number one risk factor for heart disease among PWA/HIV. You may also be at greater risk for heart disease if you: have parents or siblings who have had heart disease; have diabetes, high blood pressure or abnormal cholesterol levels; are a man older than 45 or a woman older than 55; carry around extra weight, particularly around your midsection; experience depression or high levels of stress; don't get enough physical exercise; or use street or party drugs such as cocaine, ecstasy, heroin or crystal meth.

It is important to discuss any and all of your risk factors with your doctor to determine your overall risk for heart disease.

What you can do

There's not much you can do about risk factors like your age or family history, but there are many risk factors you can control with help and advice from a doctor, nurse or dietitian. By making a few changes to your life, you won't only be doing your heart a big favor but you'll probably feel a lot better, too. You might start with just one or two of the following suggestions:

Butt out. Smokers are at far greater risk for cardiovascular disease. And smoking rates are significantly higher among PWA/HIV than among the general population. So if you don't smoke, don't start! If you do smoke, quitting is the single most





important thing you can do to reduce your risk of heart disease. Quitting smoking also reduces your risk of lung disease, cancer, thinning bones and many other health problems.

Once you quit smoking, your risk for heart disease will diminish as time goes by—it will be cut roughly in half three years after you quit. Talk to your doctor or nurse for advice about quitting smoking. Nicotine replacements in the form of patches and gum are available. Certain medications and other therapies might also help you quit. Remember that quitting is a process that requires patience and perseverance. For many people, it takes several tries before they're successful. If you have friends and family members who also smoke, see if one of them will commit to kicking the habit with you. (For more info about quitting see page 4)

Eat healthy. Studies have found that eating a diet rich in colorful fruit and vegetables, low-fat dairy products and whole grains can significantly reduce high blood pressure and cholesterol. Eating a handful of nuts (such as almonds, pistachios or walnuts) every day may also help improve your cholesterol levels. Reducing your intake of salt helps to lower blood pressure. And limiting the amount of saturated and trans fats you consume will help keep your cholesterol down (See page 18 for some delicious and healthy recipes).


Ask your doctor or nurse for a referral to a registered dietitian who can give you the advice and support you need.

Bust a move. The “miracle drug” called exercise can help reduce inflammation, lower bad cholesterol levels, help control diabetes and lead to weight loss. Because of these benefits, regular exercise (four or more times per week) can reduce your risk for heart disease. Ideally, your exercise should cause you to break a sweat, make you somewhat breathless and significantly increase your heart rate for at least 30 minutes. Before doing anything more vigorous than walking, talk to your doctor or nurse about what kind of exercise is right for you.

Take it off. If you are overweight or have a large belly, gradually reducing your weight will help lower your risk for heart attacks.

De-stress. Easier said than done, but try to keep the stress in your life to a minimum. If avoiding stressful events isn't possible, acupuncture, massage, meditation, yoga and other relaxing activities can help you cope with stress. And make sure to get plenty of sleep.

Depression seems to increase a person's risk of heart disease, so let your doctor know if you feel unexpectedly tired or persistently sad or angry. He or she may be able to help or at least refer you to someone who can.



Regular monitoring of your heart health should be part of your plan for living longer and living well.

Got Amida Care?

Get Meds FREE

**To help you
Quit**



✓ **Nicotine Medications**

✓ **Chantix**

✓ **Zyban**

Quit or cut down on substance use.

Cocaine, speed, crystal meth and ecstasy can increase your risk of a heart attack. Injecting substances such as heroin or cocaine can also cause serious life-threatening infections, and the resulting inflammation may affect your heart. If you use drugs and want to cut down, speak to a counselor or someone who can support you.

Practice safer sex. Research suggests that sexually transmitted infections (STIs) heighten your risk for heart disease. Sex can and should be fun but there's no need to expose yourself to germs. Practicing safer sex, even if you are HIV positive and have sex with other HIV positive people, helps reduce your risk of catching and passing on STIs. Talk to your doctor about testing for and treating STIs.

Reduce your exposure to germs.

Chronic exposure to germs may increase inflammation in your body, which is a risk factor for heart disease. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. And visit your dentist regularly to maintain your dental health. Because the flu also causes inflammation, if you have heart disease and get the flu, you are at heightened risk for a heart attack. Be sure to get a flu shot every fall.

Can nutritional supplements help?

You may have heard about natural health products (vitamins, herbs and supplements) that are supposed to prevent or cure heart disease; unfortunately, there is no such magic bullet. If you do take supplements, let your doctor and pharmacist know what you are taking. Some natural health products can weaken the effects of HIV medications, make the side effects worse or cause their own side effects.


Take Heart

Dr. Julian Falutz, director of the HIV Metabolic Centre at the McGill University Health Centre in Montreal, tells his patients: "You can get the most bang for your buck by quitting smoking. Also, find simple ways to be more active in your daily life. Park your car farther away from where you're going. Stop taking the elevator—climb the stairs instead . . ." You get the idea.

After three months of doing this, you may notice a change: lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, improved energy, weight loss. The key is to keep it up. Falutz notes that the temptation is to think after a few months: "I've done it. I kicked the habit: I've quit smoking. I can have one cigarette." Don't. Keep it up. The same goes for other lifestyle changes, too.

To empower his patients, Falutz points out that they've taken pills (ART) every day—in some cases, for decades—to keep their viral load undetectable. That takes commitment, work and discipline. "Don't short-change yourself. You can do it."

Debbie Koenig is a writer/editor at CATIE. This article is based on a CATIE fact sheet written by CATIE science and medicine editor Sean Hosein. CATIE is Canada's source for up-to-date, unbiased information about HIV and hepatitis C.



Research suggests that sexually transmitted infections (STIs) heighten your risk for heart disease.





Fantei

Fantei is a very charismatic and beautiful person. Her smile can brighten up a whole room. She exudes wisdom and happy peacefulness. You can't help but tell yourself, "She knows something about life."

We had the opportunity to sit with her for a conversation about life, overcoming addiction and taking care of herself.

Fantei was born and raised in Harlem, one of thirteen kids. Although most of her siblings grew up to become law-abiding citizens, four of them became involved with illegal drugs at a young age. Fantei was one of them. For many years she was addicted to crack and her life was defined by the search for her next high. There was no price too high to pay for that next hit. She would do whatever she needed to get her next crack rock. Her mind, her body and her soul was ruled and controlled by it. Her health, her wellbeing and her self-worth were victims of this illness of addiction.

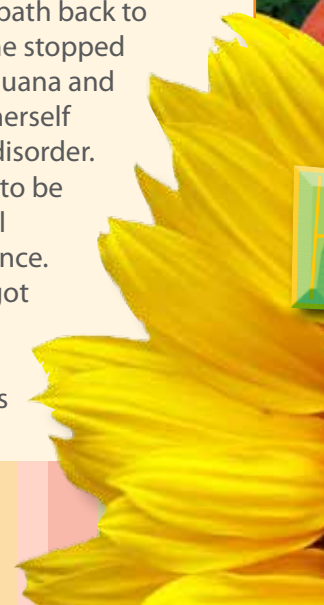
By the 90's, her siblings had died from the consequences of addiction. She understood that if she did not stop she would be next. In 1991 she tested positive for HIV, but ignored the diagnosis. Although she wanted to stop, at that time, crack was still the ruler of her world. She lived in denial for 2 more years, continuing to get high on crack and navigating the underworld that surrounds its use. As a result, she lost custody of her daughter, and her health had deteriorated.

One day in 1993, she woke up in a hospital, all beaten up, victim of rape and assault. The perpetrators brutally attacked her, leaving her for dead. She considers her survival a miracle. She found herself alone, in pain, with no money or resources. But a little light of hope shined from within her broken body: "I am worth a little more than this," she said to herself. Suddenly, a new way of seeing herself materialized, "I am worth a lot more than this," she asserted with conviction.

"I was desperate. All I could do was ask God for help, and I heard an inner voice respond, 'I am going to help you.' That was the beginning of a new life for me," tells Fantei. That day she started her successful path to self-love and recovery.

She stopped using crack, got an apartment and started working on improving her health. She persevered and got back the custody of her daughter. Life was becoming good.

But there were still challenges. Fantei is very honest about the ups and downs of the path back to health and wellness. Although she stopped using crack, she would use marijuana and alcohol socially. She also found herself battling depression and bipolar disorder. On March 22, 2003, she decided to be completely free of all recreational drugs. She has been clean ever since. It was during that time that she got custody of her godson, who is now 12. She also went back to school and finished her bachelors





Living Her Life!

degree, becoming the first person in her family to ever finish college, a fact that brings tears to her eyes. Wanting to help people get the resources and services they needed, she started working as a case manager at an HIV/AIDS organization in Brooklyn. Fantei has taken advantage of the life lessons she got to learn. Here she shares with us some of the tools and strategies she uses to balance life and wellness.

Self-love – “I wake up very early in the morning and the first thing I do is to look at myself in the mirror, hug me and tell myself, ‘I love you!’ I read inspirational affirmations. That is the way I want to start the day, loving myself”.

Discipline – “I decided to go to the gym twice a week. I do not listen to my excuses. It does not matter if I want to go or not. It could be any two days of the week, but twice a week, at 5:00am I go to the gym. That is important for my health and stamina.

Mental Health – “I take my medication for depression and bipolar disorder as prescribed. At the beginning I would take them for a while, until I felt better and then I would stop. Then I would have a break down and I would start again. I learned that it is better to take the treatment as prescribed -- that brings lasting results.”

Balance – “Give a little, and give yourself a little more. I could love and support others, but I have to love

myself a little more. I use to give, give, give, trying to take care of everybody. Now I know that I have to take care of me too, and replenish that which I am giving to others. There has to be a balance."

Emotional Health – "Therapy has helped me immensely. I believe what the song says 'People who need people are the luckiest people in the world!' I go to my one-on-one therapy sessions and also to two support groups. I love people!"

HIV Treatment – "As I said before, I learned that I need to take my medication as prescribed. If I have nausea or feel quizzly, I tell the doctor. If we have to play with the dosage, or switch medication we (the doctor and I) would make that choice, but I will not stop or alter my treatment on my own. I take my treatment very seriously. I take my pills before going to bed, and every Sunday after the family meal, I set my pillbox for the whole week."

Choices – Now that Fantei is free from the use of illegal drugs and alcohol, she feels that now she has choices. And she has chosen to LIVE HER LIFE. "I have been part of Amida Care for less than a year, but what impressed me the most was that Amida Care offered me choices, choices on primary care providers, clinics, hospitals and specialists, like podiatrists and pulmonary doctors. Also I just find

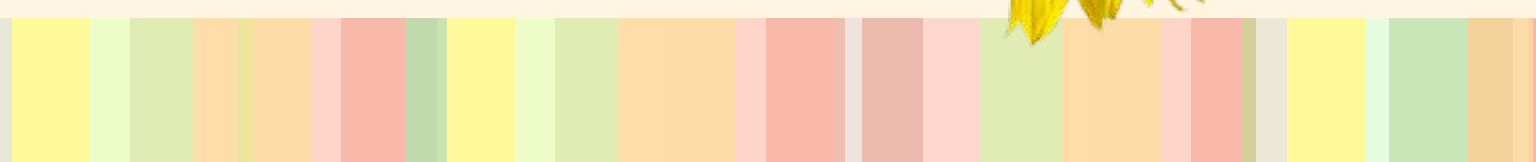
out that I can enroll my son although he does not have HIV."

Live Your Life Events – Besides her ability to choose health services providers, Fantei is impressed with Amida Care's offering of activities. "That tagline 'Live Your Life' spoke to me. That is what I have decided – to live MY life – to take care of me and my family to the best of my abilities. These LYL events opened doors for me and helped me take care of myself. I go to the yoga classes on Tuesdays - I tried to go to yoga classes before but they were too expensive. Now I can do it for free at Amida Care. I also enjoyed the aromatherapy and meditation events."

Final words

"I have to learn many lessons on how to take care of me and my children," adds Fantei. "One of the things that I learned was that taking care of you is a day-to-day commitment; you chose what's right for you every day. With practice, it becomes easier to choose right. But still one has to be very aware and make sure one stays on track."

I could love and support others, but I have to love myself a little more.





Things You Need to Know About Relapse

People in recovery and their families are often terrified of relapse. Understanding the following 5 points may help.

1 Relapse is common. Although relapses are not inevitable, they are common. Many people have one or more relapses before achieving long-lasting sobriety or abstinence. This does not mean the end of efforts toward abstinence and recovery. The person needs to get back into treatment and the family needs to continue attending a support group, professional counseling, or both.

2 Work together to prevent relapse. People in recovery may have frequent urges to drink or use drugs, and feel guilty about it, even though these urges are a normal part of recovery. It's important to work together to anticipate high-risk situations (such as a party where alcohol will be served) and plan ways to prevent them.

3 Relapse can happen during good times, too. Sometimes relapse occurs when the person is doing well with their recovery. He or she feels healthy, confident, and/or "cured" and believes that he or she is ready to go back to casual, regular or "controlled" use of drugs or alcohol. The person may remember the honeymoon period of their use (even though it may have been long ago) — when his or her use didn't cause problems — and

may want to return to that place. But this is often impossible since addiction changes the physical makeup of the brain and the person in recovery is no longer able to use drugs or alcohol in a controlled fashion.

4 If relapse occurs. Medical professionals, particularly those who specialize in substance use disorders, are an extremely important asset during a time of relapse. They can help the person learn techniques for containing feelings, focusing on the present, and making use of support from others. Relying on group support from Twelve Step programs, engaging in prayer or meditation, and finding other ways to stay on an even keel can also be extremely helpful.

5 Learn from relapse. Experts have found that a relapse can serve as an important opportunity for the recovering person and other family members to identify what triggered the relapse in the first place — and find ways to avoid it in the future.

<http://www.drugfree.org/recover>





Amida Care's Better Days program is being re-established to assist formerly incarcerated men and women who are returning to the community from jail or prison. The program will assist members with referrals to community based services, substance abuse and behavioral health treatment. It will also provide assistance establishing a relationship with a primary care provider immediately after release. Our program staff is familiar with the many obstacles people face when they are newly released, and can help members avoid common problems and handle tricky issues.

Problems such as access to transportation, difficulties getting IDs, incomplete discharge planning, unstable housing, limited family and

social support or having other urgent, unresolved needs may prevent people recently released from prison from staying on top of their medical care. These things can make it difficult for people to get to their doctors and take good care of themselves. There are many blocks to receiving appropriate medical care and other services when returning home from jail or prison, and we hope to help lessen these obstacles with our Better Days program.

It is our belief that assisting members in obtaining excellent care following their release, connecting them with community resources, and providing peer support and follow up, is yet another step toward building a community of empowered citizens.

Recently Released?

Here are Five Resources to Help You Move Forward...

1 Often, people who are recently released from prison do not have copies of identifying documents. You can get assistance in obtaining copies of birth certificates, social security cards, Non-Drivers' IDs and other documents by contacting 'Project Identity' at St John's Bread & Life, 718-574-0058.

2 If you are in need of healthy and nutritious food, call the **National Hunger Hotline at 866-348-6479** to be connected with a food pantry near you.

3 Interested in furthering your education? The **Fortune Society** offers GED and Basic Adult Literacy classes, and their College Initiative Program assists those who wish to pursue higher educational goals. Call them at **212-691-7554** for more information.

4 Upon returning home, it is a good idea to obtain a copy of your rap sheet and review it for mistakes. **The Legal Action Center (212-243-1313)** can help you with obtaining and correcting mistakes on rap sheets and obtaining certificates of rehabilitation.

5 Are you a formerly incarcerated person in need of additional information and resources, including referrals for housing assistance or help connecting with medical providers? **Interested in finding out more about the Better Days Program at Amida Care? Contact Karalyn Shimmyo, 646-532-2973 or kshimmyo@amidacareny.org.**

Are Alcohol And/Or Drugs Making Your Life Unmanageable?

AMIDA CARE CAN HELP!

Your Amida Care benefits include treatment for chemical dependency. Call us today to find out what services are available to you.

Amida Care Behavioral Health
1-866-644-7142



ASTHMA AND HIV: What to Watch Out For

by Patricia Bronzert , M.D.

Amida Care members with asthma should be aware that they need to be careful when taking asthma medicines because some asthma inhalers can have interactions with their HIV medications.

A certain type of asthma inhaler called steroid inhalers are used to help prevent asthma attacks and control asthma long-term. Some of these steroid inhalers can interact with the HIV medications called Protease Inhibitors. If these steroid inhalers are taken together with Protease Inhibitors, it can cause a syndrome called Adrenal Failure and that causes hormonal changes. These hormonal changes can make new, unexpected changes in your body.

Signs to be aware of:

- o Sudden weight gain
- o Acne
- o New hair growth, particularly on the face and body
- o High blood pressure

The steroid inhalers to avoid are:

Asmanex, Flovent and Advair

The steroid inhalers that are safe to use with Protease Inhibitors are:

Pulmicort, QVAR and Vanceril.

The most common inhalers used for asthma are not the long-acting steroid inhalers, but the quick-acting inhalers like Albuterol which is perfectly safe to use with any HIV medications. As always, the safest thing to do is to talk to your PCP and tell them about all of the medications you are taking, even the ones you get over-the-counter, without a prescription.



Table of Protease Inhibitors

Brand Name	Generic Name
Aptivus	tipranavir
Crixivan	indinavir
Invirase	saquinavir
Kaletra	lopinavir + ritonavir
Lexiva	fosamprenavir
Norvir	ritonavir
Prezista	darunavir
Reyataz	atazanavir
Viracept	nelfinavir

Excessive Drinking Is Dangerous!



It increases the risk of many problems.

- Cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver
- Hepatitis
- Osteoporosis
- Hypertension
- Enlarged heart or weakening of the heart muscle
- Cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, breast, and colon
- Weakened immune system
- Pneumonia and other infections
- Accidents and injuries
- Committing or being the victim of acts of violence
- Depression, dementia, and other mental disorders
- Suicide

Sometimes Any Drinking Can Be Harmful

It is safest to avoid alcohol altogether if you:

- Will be driving or operating machinery
- Are pregnant or trying to become pregnant
- Are caring for children or others
- Have a personal history of alcohol or drug dependence
- Are taking prescription or over-the-counter medications that interact with alcohol
- Are under legal drinking age (21)
- Children and adolescents who drink are at much higher risk for motor-vehicle crashes and alcohol-related brain damage.

- The younger people are when they start drinking, the more likely they are to have problems with alcohol use as adults.

Be extra cautious about drinking if you have:

- A family history of alcohol or drug dependence
- Certain illnesses, such as diabetes, congestive heart failure, or long-term stomach, pancreas, or liver problems – even one drink a day can accelerate liver damage in people with hepatitis
- A history of depression
- A psychiatric illness

How Much Is Too Much?

For men:

- Excessive drinking is defined as 5 or more drinks in a short period of time, such as a 2-hour period, or
- More than 14 drinks in a week.

For women and people 65 and older:

- Excessive drinking is defined as 4 or more drinks in a short period of time, such as a 2-hour period, or
- More than 7 drinks in a week.

Problem Drinking Is Treatable

Many treatment options are available, including medications.

- Looking honestly at your own drinking and its effects on you and others can be difficult. But honesty is usually the first and most important step in getting help.
- For help and information, talk to your doctor or call LifeNet (see **More Information and Help**).

More Information and Help

- For help with alcohol or drug use problems: call 311 or LifeNet (800-543-3638)
- Spanish LifeNet: 877-AYUDESE (877-298-3373)
- Asian LifeNet (Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean): 877-990-8585
- Alcoholics Anonymous: www.nyintergroup.org or 212-647-1680
- National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information: www.samhsa.gov or 1-800-729-6686.

What Counts As One Drink?



A 12-oz. glass, bottle, or can of beer or ale



A 5-oz. glass of wine, or a 3.5-oz. glass of fortified wine



A 1.5-oz. "shot" of distilled liquor or brandy (straight or in a mixed drink)

Don't give up!
People can and do get better, every day.
Recovery is possible.

Source: Health Bulletin #83, NYCDOHMH

You Have The Right To Be Treated With Dignity And Respect



Does someone close to you ...

- Push or hit you?
- Humiliate you in public?
- Control your money?
- Tell you who to see, what to wear, what to do?
- Threaten to hurt you?
- Force you to have sex?
- Keep you from seeing friends and family?
- Threaten to report you to immigration officials?
- Threaten to take your children?

**You might be in an
abusive relationship.**

Help is available to Amida Care members.

**Talk to your primary care provider or
case manager about what is going on.
You can change things and there are
people here to help you.**

Emergencies, call 9-1-1

**NYC Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-621-HOPE (4673)**

**Amida Care Domestic Violence Coordinator:
Nicole Mylan @ 1-646-786-1800**

**Member Services
1-800-556-0689**



Winter Life Celebration!



This past January, Amida Care hosted our annual Winter Life Celebration. And celebrating we did! Among clouds of colorful balloons, delicious and abundant food, and some great music (the sound that makes your body move) - we came together to commemorate and be thankful for one more year of life, health and community. The evening was filled with joy, togetherness and family. Here are some photos of the evening. Make sure you do not miss our Summer Life Celebration. It promises to be the event of the season!

Eating healthy helps your body fight illness. Eating the right foods in the right amounts can give you that extra energy you need. Some days you may feel too weak or too sick to eat. Yet—eating well can help you fight HIV.

- Get enough calories each day to help you stay at a healthy weight.
- Stay away from “junk food” or “fast food” choices.
- Eat fruits and vegetables for vitamins and fiber.
- Be careful when you prepare foods so you won’t get sick.



Latin Chicken and Rice Pot

Adapted from Rachael Ray's original Latin Chicken and Rice Pot recipe

Serves: 5 servings

Prep Time: 20 min

Cook Time: 25 min

Ingredients

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons butter
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken tenders, breasts or thighs, cut into bite size pieces
Salt and pepper
2 cups white rice
3 cups chicken broth
1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1 tablespoon Sazon seasoning blend (recommended: Goya)
1 cup tomato sauce

Olive and Pepper Salsa:

1 cup Spanish olives with pimientos, drained and chopped
2 vine ripe tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1 small green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
1 small white skinned onion, chopped
Several drops hot sauce
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, a handful
1/2 lemon or lime, juiced
Salt

Avocado Topping:

2 ripe avocados, pitted and spooned flesh from skins
1/2 lemon, juiced
1 clove garlic
Salt

Like to cook? Check out these delicious, easy and nutritional recipes from Summer Kriegshauser, our Chef/Nutritionist extraordinaire!

**Directions**

Preheat a medium pot over medium heat, and add extra-virgin olive oil and butter. When butter melts into oil, add cut-up chicken. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Stir and lightly brown the chicken, then add the rice and cook another 1 to 2 minutes.

Add chicken stock, poultry seasoning, Sazon seasoning, and tomato sauce. Bring the stock to a quick boil, 2 or 3 minutes. When the liquid boils, reduce heat to low and cook 13 to 15 minutes, until rice is tender but still a little chewy in the center.

While the rice and chicken are working, prepare the salsa. Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and adjust the salt and hot sauce, to taste.

Next prepare the Avocado Topping by adding all ingredients to a food processor and processing until smooth. Adjust seasoning, then transfer to a small bowl.

Stir 1/2 cup of prepared Olive and Pepper Salsa to the chicken and rice mixture. Turn off heat and let stand 5 minutes.

Serve the prepared Latin Rice and Chicken in shallow bowls with spoonfuls of salsa and avocado to garnish.

Fresh Green Salad with Herb Dressing

Serves 5

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 5 Minutes

Ingredients:

1 large head of green leaf or red leaf lettuce, chopped into bite-sized pieces
1 green, yellow, or red pepper, sliced in chunks
1 ripe avocado, sliced into chunks
1 large ripe tomato, seeds removed and sliced in chunks
1/2 red onion, cut into small pieces

Dressing:

1 cup olive oil
1/3 to 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
2 cloves garlic, peeled
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 cup dill, stems removed
1 cup cilantro, stems removed

Directions:

Add 1/2 cup olive oil and all other dressing ingredients to food processor. Blend on high, gradually adding the remaining olive oil, until all ingredients are liquid. Toss all salad ingredients in a bowl and add dressing



Banana Coconut Yogurt Parfait with Cashews

Serves 5

Prep time: 10 Minutes

Cook time: 10 Minutes

Ingredients:

1/4 cup honey
2 1/2 cups plain yogurt
2 Tablespoons coconut oil
5 bananas, sliced thinly
1/2 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/4 cup cashews, crushed

Directions:

Stir honey into yogurt.* Heat skillet to medium heat. Add coconut oil and coat the bottom of the pan with it. Add bananas, coconut, and vanilla extract. Cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring regularly.

Turn off heat. Take 5 dessert cups or small bowls, add 1/4 cup yogurt to the bottom of the cups, add a few banana slices with coconut on top of the yogurt, add a spoonful or two of cashews on top, layer with another 1/4 cup yogurt, layer with more banana slices and coconut, and top off with cashews.

*Add more honey if you want the yogurt sweeter





the ZEN corner

emerging

by Doug Wirth

**no one can make you feel
inferior without your consent**

Eleanor Roosevelt

Being in the Now

by Carlos N. Molina

Many of us face small and big challenges everyday—from, “I need to do laundry, I need my broken toilet fixed,” to “I am losing my apartment.” All these challenges can cause increased levels of stress and anxiety. While a little stress can help us get going and make things happen, unmanaged and chronic stress or anxiety can cause serious emotional and health problems.

I remember being stressed and anxious after moving to New York in 1993 and starting to work in the area of social justice and HIV/AIDS. I not only witnessed intense discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, but I also saw sexism, classism and racism—at times from the very organizations that were supposed to advocate and safeguard people's rights.

Unable to manage all these stresses, my anger for these injustices and my own personal feelings of powerlessness, caused me great pain and worry about our future and my personal survival. Uninsured, and unaware about available resources, I decided that I could tough it out, that I would overcome on my own. Unfortunately, emotional and spiritual issues—like other wellness issues—do not go away by trying to ignore them, and in my case, they got worse.

One night, I woke up in the middle of the night to something or someone shaking my bed. It took me a few moments of great fear to realize that I was the one shaking the bed. My body was shaking uncontrollably, making the metal frame of my bed rattle like my Grandpa's old truck. My breathing was difficult and I thought I was dying. My whole body was filled with terror. I later learned that I was suffering from panic attacks.

These panic attacks became part of my life, creeping in and out, wreaking havoc with my spirit and body. They started happening while I was awake, usually when I was alone in my bed in the dark. Thoughts of all kinds of possible dooms would dance in my head. After a few cycles of *what if's* — *what if I lose my job, what if I get sick, what if I get evicted, what if these panic attacks happen everyday?* I would just sob until my body had no more energy, only then would I fall asleep from pure exhaustion.

Being a person of faith, living with no health insurance, on a limited income, I reached for what was available—my connection with the Divine. One thing that helped me was to realize that I was suffering emotionally and physically for something that had not happened. That although things could get tough, even ugly, at that moment that was not true. At that moment I had a roof over my head,

food to eat and, more importantly, the possibility of change, of improving my life. I learned that if I focused on the present, in this moment, on the now, things would become more manageable. By accident - or Divine support - I discovered an exercise that helped me greatly to be present, to be in the now. We can use our body and our senses to be in the now. Here is what I learned.





the NOW exercise



- 1** Sit or lay down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes.
- 2** Become aware of your breathing. Just pay attention to it. Is it shallow, deep, rhythmical? Don't judge it; just notice it.
- 3** After a few minutes, take a few deep breaths through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
- 4** Become aware of your buttocks. Feel the pressure of the chair or bed against it. Is the chair/bed hard, soft, lumpy? Do not judge, just notice.



- 5 Become aware of your back. Feel the chair or bed touching it. Feel the pressure between your back and chair/bed. Is it even or is there more pressure in one area than in another? Just notice.
- 6 Become aware of your body temperature. Are you cold, warm, hot? Is there a part of your body that is cooler or warmer? Are your feet warm or cold? What about your hands, your nose, your ears?
- 7 Slowly open your eyes, and without changing body position begin to be aware of your surroundings. Notice the light in the room. Is it bright or dark? Where is the light coming from: above, behind, the left or the front of you? What colors can you see? Name them. Are they bright, light, dark? What shapes do you see around you? Describe them: circles, squares, triangles. No judgment, just notice.
- 8 Gently move your head and look around. Notice the room. Notice the walls; what color are they? What is their texture? Notice the windows and the doors. How many are there? What color are their frames? Are there pictures or photos on the walls? How many? What colors are in the pictures? Look up and look at the ceiling. What color is it? Is it flat, textured, or buckled? Are there any shadows and light patterns on it? Just notice.



9 Notice the floor, what color is it? What is it made of? Is it laid out in a pattern? What kind of pattern? Notice carpets, lamps, shoes or clothes that are on the floor. Do not judge, just notice.

10 Look around the room and find an object that you like, that you find beautiful. What is the object? What color and shape is it? What do you like about the object? Stay with the thought and feeling of what you like about the object. Relish its beauty for a few moments. Look at it, study that object, and notice how the light shines over the object. Notice the shadows the object creates around it. Celebrate the object and see its beauty. Be thankful for the object, feel that gratitude. Stay with the feeling of gratitude for a few moments.

11 When ready, move your body slowly, your neck, your legs, arms and torso; when you are ready, stand and slowly move on.

This exercise made a great difference in my life. I still use it and also use a short version that I can practice in the subway or my office.

Moreover, I learned that there are great treatments for anxiety, depression and panic attacks. There is no need to suffer all the emotional and physical stress these conditions can cause.

A little self-help, plus a little professional aid, can change one's life for the better, and helps us stay in the now.



Q&A

with
Amida



Q Do I need a referral to see a specialist, such as a dermatologist or cardiologist?

A Usually, your Primary Care Provider will be your first stop when you need healthcare. It's best if your PCP refers you to a specialist when you need one so that he or she is aware of the outcome and treatment. However, you do not need a referral form to see a specialist. Just bring a note on a prescription pad from your PCP, so that they can get a copy of the specialist's report. There are some specialists who require that you have this note from your PCP before they will see you, so it's a good idea to always bring this to your specialty care appointments.

Q Some of my benefits require pre-authorization. What does that mean?

A There are some treatments and services that you need to get approval for before you receive them or in order to be able to continue receiving them. This is called pre-authorization or prior authorization. Some treatments and services that must be approved before you get them include elective (non-emergency) surgery, hearing aids, physical therapy, home health care and medical equipment that costs more than \$500. Asking for approval of a treatment or service is called a service authorization request. To get approval for these treatments or services, your doctor may call our toll-free **Amida Care Utilization Management** number for Medical Services at **1-888-364-6061**. Once the request is made and we have all the information we need, we will make a decision within 3 business days.



Q I still don't have an ID card - what should I do?

A When you join the Plan we send an Amida Care Identification Card to the address provided by Medicaid. If you are no longer at that address, we will get the card back and will attempt to call you to resend. Sometimes, even when we send the cards to the address that you have provided, the post office still returns it to us as undeliverable. If you have provided us with your correct address and still cannot get your card, please contact us at **1-800-556-0689** or **member-services@amidacareny.org**, and we can arrange to have a replacement card sent to our main office or our borough offices in Brooklyn or the Bronx where you can pick it up and receive a Metro Card. We can also send it to your case manager if you prefer.

However, you do not need the Amida Care card to get services. As long as you have your Medicaid card and you are going to a provider that is part of the Amida Care network, you can receive services. If you have any problems accessing services, please call us at **1-800-556-0689**.

If you have any questions or need our assistance at any time, please call us at 1-800-556-0689 or send us an email at member-services@amidacareny.org

Your Personal Native American Medicine Necklace

**Thursday, April 19, 2012
3:00pm – 5:00pm**

HELP/PSI

1545 Inwood Avenue, Bronx, NY 10452

**Tuesday, April 24, 2012
3:00pm – 5:00pm**

El Faro East

179 East 116th St. 3rd Flr, NY, NY 10029



**Join us and create your own personalized necklace that will remind
you of your personal strengths and dreams.**

Save The Dates

May

Juicing For Life - May 17 and 24, 2012

Location: TBA

June

Fire on the Dance Floor - Salsa Dancing Classes

June 21 and 28, 2012

Location: TBA

July

Jazz it is! An evening of Smooth Jazz,

Live Performers

July 19 and 26, 2012

Location: TBA

August

Summer Life Celebration

Date and Location :TBA

September

Art for Life

"The Artist in You"

Date and Location :TBA

October:

Inner Healing

Date and location: TBA

**Remember to visit our website www.amidacareny.org
for up-to-date information on the next Live Your Life Event**