



The AMIDACARE View



Holiday
Special Issue

A Newsletter for Amida Care Members!

Volume 16 • December 2012



Dear Amida Care Members,

Welcome to our holiday issue of The Amida Care View. We put a lot of Heart and Soul in its creation, and we hope that it will be another useful tool to support you on your path to wellness and happiness.

For many of us, the Holiday Season can be stressful. It seems like this time of the year is filled with expectations and obligations that can make us a little crazy. This magazine is jam-packed with valuable information that will help you stay healthy — in body, mind and spirit.

I want to highlight two special contributors to this, your magazine. Mondo Guerra, the winner of the TV show Project Runway All Stars, shares with us his experience of spending Christmas at a hospital with PCP, his decision to get well and pursue his goals (see page 2).



Also, Jamar Rogers, from the TV show The Voice, shares his hard earned wisdom and strategies for surviving the holidays (page 8).

Completing this issue, are articles and information on nutrition, meditation, flu, skin care, and how to access resources like food pantries and sources of winter clothing. There is also a special report on our 2013 Calendar art selection (page 16). Watch the mail for your personal copy of the 2013 Amida Care Calendar!

As the year ends, we reflect on all that we are grateful for. More people joined our Plan (AC is fastest growing SNP). We expanded our services and opened satellite offices in the Bronx and Brooklyn. We successfully launched our pharmacy program. And, we're closer to offering coverage in Queens. We are proud of these achievements, but our relationship with you is the one thing we treasure most. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

Table of Content

Welcome Letter	<i>Inside Cover</i>
Surrendering	1
Mondo Guerra	2
Speak Up for your Health	5
10 Things We Should Know About The Flu!	7
Jamar Rogers	8
Oh No, The Holidays Again!	11
We Are Here for You!	13
Healthy Eating During The Holidays	14
The 2013 Art Calendar is Here!	16
Holiday "Survival Tips"	18
Beautiful Skin, the Natural Way	20
Q & A with Amida	23
Help After the Storm	24
Live Your Life Event	26

On behalf of the Amida Care Board of Directors, our Member Advisory Committee, our staff and myself, we wish you a very Merry Season of Holidays and much happiness in the New Year. We look forward to serving you in 2013 with continued passion and commitment.

With a warm embrace,

Doug Wirth
President & CEO

Photographic Image Disclosure:

The photographs used herein are for illustrative purposes only; they do not imply any particular professional credential or health status on the part of any person depicted. Some of the persons depicted are models, who are neither employees nor enrolled members of Amida Care.



Surrendering



Foto - Doug Wirth

*when we reject what we
know to be our truth -
we are but stone*

*when we surrender to
our inner voice
- the masterpiece that
we are unfolds*

Doug Wirth

With all the holiday celebrations coming up, it can be challenging to be around so many family members and friends. It can also be a great time of year. Whatever your plans, remember to be yourself -- your true self -- during this season of holidays.

With all the holiday celebrations coming up, it can be challenging to be around so many family members and friends. It can also be a great time of year. Whatever your plans, remember to be yourself – your true self -- during this season of holidays. You can be where ever you are in each moment: sad, happy, scared, angry, thankful, peaceful. You don't need to fake it ... to make it through the holidays.

And, the best gift you can given anyone is YOU. And try to remember, there are consequences to pushing our difficult feelings on to others. There's a big difference between telling someone, "I'm angry right now. I need some time to myself," and acting out our angry or frustration by screaming at someone to leave me alone.

In challenging moments over the holidays, try this simple self care practice:

- 1** Find a quiet spot for you to be with you.
- 2** Take three deep breaths (fill the air down into your belly) and ask yourself: "What am I feeling right now?"
- 3** When you get your answer, affirm yourself by simply saying, "I feel (fill in the blank)." Then make the feeling a little bigger by raising the volume in your voice or stomping your feet and repeat your statement above (several times).
- 4** Close this process with a blessing or prayer: let whatever is in your heart become your spoken words (trust this is perfect for you in this moment.)

Mondo

I was diagnosed as HIV-positive 11 years ago. After my diagnosis, I felt scared and alone, and I did not speak with anyone regarding my diagnosis, in large part because of the stigma surrounding the disease. I didn't seek any type of support or take steps toward addressing my health. After about nine years of living with and neglecting my disease, my health began quickly declining. One Christmas, I was hospitalized with *Pneumocystis pneumonia* (PCP) and was basically dying of AIDS.

To take back control of my own life, I became determined to stop letting HIV define me.

Mondo Guerra,
Winner of Project Runway All Stars

' Christmas Story

My family had no idea the real reasons that prompted my illness. I remember my mother bringing a Christmas tree to my hospital room when she came to visit, and let me know that the whole family was waiting for my return home to open presents and celebrate. All the while, I was thinking to myself, I might not be going home.

It was at this moment I realized that if I was going to live I needed to start being honest, with at least myself, about my HIV status. To take back control of my own life, I became determined to stop letting HIV define me. My first step was working with my doctor and learning how to take care of my health, so I could start setting new life goals. And my first goal was to make it onto *Project Runway* – which I did on Season 8 of the show!

Disclosing my HIV status on national TV wasn't planned, I hadn't even told my family. But, during a challenge to create a textile inspired by a personal story, I realized I had to explain to the judges that the plus-sign design I created was inspired by my HIV-positive status. That moment became my next life-changing experience – and to my surprise, I felt an overwhelming sense of relief. I waited until only four days before the episode aired to tell my family about my status, and their response was even more supportive than I ever could have imagined. After coming out about my status, my mother told me that she hoped I would use this to inspire other people living with the disease, and I feel privileged to be able to lend my voice as an HIV advocate.

It's such an important cause that is still surrounded by so much stigma, especially within the Latino community where I'm from.

That's one of the many reason why I'm incredibly excited to be working with Merck on the national HIV education campaign *I Design*. The campaign helps to empower people living with HIV to work with their doctors in taking a "tailored" approach to their treatment plan. We all have different needs and our treatment plans should reflect that. Taking the time to prepare for each doctor visit can help you get the most out of every visit. I find it helpful to keep a journal or checklist to make sure I remember to ask any questions I may have, and discuss important goals of treatment, including CD4 cell counts, viral load, side effects, and my overall health.

On the *I Design* campaign website, www.ProjectIDesign.com, you can download a checklist to bring to your doctor's office and help guide your conversation (*See page 5 for a printed copy.*) You can also find out more about the campaign, and there's a fun interactive tool where you can design a digital textile.

All of the amazing people I've met through this campaign are so inspiring, and I'm excited to continue educating others so we're all better equipped to fight the stigma and this disease. It's been a long road to get where I am, but I'm very excited about the future.

More about Mondo on page 6

Mondo Guerra

Denver designer Mondo Guerra first endeared himself to an international audience in 2010 on Lifetime's *Project Runway* season 8. His innovative style and bold designs have captured the imagination of the fashion world, while his courageous story has inspired global support surrounding his HIV/AIDS activism.

Mondo returned to television in January 2012 on the debut season of *Project Runway All Stars*. In March 2012, Mondo emerged victorious from *All Stars*, claiming the largest prize package in *Runway* history—which included an exclusive designer's boutique in select Neiman Marcus stores and online.

In addition to his remarkable success on *Project Runway*, audiences rallied in support of Mondo

following the emotional disclosure of his HIV-positive status on the show. Since his courageous confession, Mondo has become vigorous advocate for HIV/AIDS awareness, educating people living with HIV on the importance of talking with their doctor about their treatment goals.

Mondo resides in Denver where he continues to pursue his dream of designing for and inspiring the world.

Photo courtesy of Lifetime



Mondo's winning HIV+ fabric design.



SPEAK UP TEAM UP FOR YOUR HEALTH

Appointment Date: _____



You might be surprised how important it is to talk with your doctor about potential side effects. Your doctor wants to know how you're feeling. This will help you and your doctor find a treatment option that may be right for you. It may help you to keep a daily journal to remember things you want to bring up.

Keep the lines of communication open. This worksheet can help. Fill out a new copy before every doctor visit and bring it along.

SET UP

Taking some time to prepare for appointments can help you get the most out of every doctor visit.

Start by thinking about how you've been feeling lately:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very Bad

Finding a treatment that's right for you is important.

Check the statements below that you may want to share with your doctor:

- I want to talk to my doctor about my daily schedule.
- I want to review all the medications I'm taking, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, to see if they affect each other.
- I have a personal history or a family history of heart problems, obesity, drug or alcohol abuse, liver disease, mental health issues, kidney disease or sexually transmitted disease.

These are the things my doctor needs to know about in order to help me.

SPEAK UP

Your doctor wants to hear how you're feeling and what's going on in your life. Here are some additional things you might want to talk to your doctor about:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diet | <input type="checkbox"/> Work life (<i>daily commute, daily schedule, work environment, loss of job</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise | <input type="checkbox"/> Social life (<i>travel, relationships</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking | <input type="checkbox"/> Home life (<i>family issues, recent moves</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol consumption | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stress | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

SPEAK UP (CONT'D)

Remember, your health care team needs to know how you're feeling and if you are having any symptoms, even if they don't seem like a problem. This information can help your team better manage your health.

Mark those symptoms below, or write them in the "Other" space so you can remember them during your next appointment.

- Fatigue or low energy
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Feeling nervous, irritable or anxious
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Trouble remembering
- Problems having sex
- Thoughts of harming yourself*

- Headache
- Cough or trouble breathing
- Fevers, chills or sweats
- Muscle aches or joint pain
- Rash
- Yellowing of the skin and/or eyes
- Loss or changes in appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

- Stomach ache
- Weight changes
- Other

*If you're having thoughts of harming yourself, talk to your doctor right away. Don't wait for the next visit.

TEAM UP

Your doctor is there to answer your questions. The better informed you are, the better the partnership can be with your doctor. So ask anything.

Here are some ways you can start the conversation:

- Are there lifestyle changes I should make?
- I'm worried that I might be having a side effect from my medicine (over-the-counter, prescription, herbal supplement, vitamins)
- What do I need to know about taking my HIV medicines?
- I know that HIV and HIV medicines can affect my overall health. How am I doing?
Have there been any changes in my lab tests (viral load, CD4, cholesterol, liver function)?
If so, what are they and what do they mean?
- What should I do before my next visit?
- Add your own questions:



Remember: Your doctor is the expert on HIV. You're the expert on how you feel. Working together can help you make sure you're doing everything you can to take care of yourself.

10 Things We Should Know About The Flu!

As cold weather approaches and we find ourselves indoors more, we tend to get sick more often. Here are 10 things to know about colds and the flu:



Colds and the flu are caused by viruses.

You can get a cold or the flu by touching someone or something that has a cold virus on it and then touching yourself. You may also inhale the droplets of virus when someone coughs or sneezes.

Most colds resolve within 7-12 days.

Antibiotics do not help with colds or the flu.

Over the counter medications will help with symptoms like runny nose, cough, sore throat and headache. These medications will not decrease the amount of time you are sick. Get rest and drink fluids to give your body the best chance for recovery.

Good hand washing and covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing help decrease the spread of colds/flu.

Get vaccinated every year for the flu (between September-March.)

Only receive the flu shot and not flu mist (intranasal spray). The flu shot cannot give you the "flu."

Stay home if you have fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, sore throat as viruses are spread easily in close contact with others.

Call or visit your health care provider if you have fevers over 101.5, have difficulty breathing or have wheezing, or develop facial pain.

HAPPY Holidays!

The holidays can be rough. The shopping, family, the winter break for the kids, the weather. It can all start to get to you after a while.

It's important for people living with HIV to remember that stress affects our health. It would be most inconvenient to get sick during the holidays so let's discuss a few simple truths we can tell ourselves in times of stress.

Truth #1: It's not that serious.

It helps to put things into perspective. The holidays are not about how much you can buy; it's about the time spent with family and friends. Sometimes we fall victim to the commercialism during this time, forgetting about what really matters. Tell yourself it's not that serious when you're standing in line on Black Friday.

Truth #2: Live within your means.

Stress is always lurking when you're robbing Peter to pay Paul. We all want to get our family and friends nice things during the holidays, but not at the expense of being in debt for the next year or going without food. Be upfront and tell your kids they may not get everything they want this year.

You're a parent, not a magician. And when you start to feel that nagging feeling that you're just not buying enough, remind yourself of Truth #1. Also remember, in gift giving, it's the thought that counts.

Truth #3: Have fun, but be responsible.

It's okay to let loose during this time of the year, but not if it means you're the bitter drunk at the family get together. One of the easiest ways to get rid of stress is to remember that it's not all about you.

Truth #4: It's okay to excuse yourself.

We all know that family can cause the most stress during this time. During times of tension, it's perfectly acceptable to say "I need to take a little walk right now." Or "I better leave now before the situation gets worse." They may not like it, but sometimes you have to choose inner peace above all else. Your health depends on it.

Let's not forget to be on the lookout for those folks that may be a little lonely and need some love from you. Giving, after all, is the ultimate stress relief.

Best,
Jamar

More about Jamar on page 10



Artist and activism
Jamar Rogers,
publicly came out as
HIV positive on the
musical competition
The Voice.

Vincent Sandoval Photography



Jamar Rogers

a voice to inspire, entertain and educate

"You're such a survivor. Your story is such an empowering, encouraging, triumphant victory of life and perseverance and sacrifice, dedication and commitment. We can't help but all be inspired by it." - Cee Lo Green

Jamar Rogers entered the world on March 1, 1982 to a single mother in New Orleans. Growing up, Jamar showed tremendous talent for singing as early as six years of age, as a teenager, he became addicted to drugs. As his life began to spiral out of control, Jamar tested positive to HIV. Completely broken, Jamar somehow found the light in the darkest time of his life and began to turn things around.

After six years of being clean from crystal meth, Jamar auditioned for The Voice and "the rest is history," as they say. Since becoming a finalist on The Voice, Jamar has appeared on popular shows such as The Today Show, Ellen, CNN, E! and numerous magazines

Currently, Jamar is recording an album set for release in February 2013, and recently dropped a new single on iTunes called "Where Would I Be Without You." In addition to recording, he is touring across the country packing out venues, while drawing crowds of all ages with his soulful voice. He is actively working in his community to demystify HIV/AIDS along with doing his best to spread a message of hope and second chances to a generation of young people.

To experience Jamar's voice, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7muSURqYI. His performance of *It's My Life* on The Voice is just enthralling.

Oh No!

The Holidays Again!

by Lee Garr

Decks the halls! Tis' the Season! Hark the Herald! Why do I feel like BAH HUM BUG... The season of joy and giving can also be a season of sadness and stress. You may feel like you're the only person who feels this way, but actually you are not alone. Many people get the holiday blues. It might be a little hard, but you can find ways to cope and reduce the stress of the holiday season. My holiday wish for you is that you take care of yourself and Live Your Life! Here are a few tips that might help:

1 Don't be so hard on yourself

Look, you're only human. The holidays sometimes have a way of making our imperfections come to light, and boy is that light bright. People tend to dwell on past mistakes.... Let it go! Mistakes are a pathway for learning life lessons. Nobody is perfect. Nobody! Perfection is boring and an impossible feat for anyone. It is our imperfections that make us beautiful and interesting. Like that freckle you have or the mole on your cheek or the gap between my teeth and my slight overbite. Seek progress in your life, not perfection. Cut yourself some slack.

2 Counseling Sessions

If you see a counselor or therapist plan ahead and see if you can schedule some extra sessions with them. If you can't do extra face to face sessions, see if you can periodically check-in by telephone. And don't forget support groups! They are a great way to stay connected and meet new friends.

3 Expectations of the season

Set your own! There is no rule book that officially says how your holiday should be. Don't believe the hype! Don't get caught up on how you're "suppose" to feel, act or think – or what the holidays are supposed to be like. You set your own standards, decorate your own soul during this holiday season.



continues on page 12

4

Lean on me

If you've been depressed, get your support system in place. Keep in touch with friends, neighbors, family- however you define family and your church. Your case workers, counselors and therapist can also help. And don't forget email and texting is also a good way to stay connected. And yes, I will join Facebook, Twitter or other forms of social media.

5

Holiday traditions

Don't feel compelled to keep old traditions if they don't work for you. Create new ones, ones that have meaning for you!

6

Positive Ways to Remember Loved Ones

The holiday season may bring up memories of loved ones who are no longer with us. It is definitely hard and something that I myself struggle with, but try not to be sad. Honor their memory. For example, put on some of their favorite music, grab a hairbrush (now your microphone) and dance and sing like you never have before. Trust and believe they will be singing and dancing with you.

7

Don't worry about things you can't control

Seriously! I mean this. You can only do what you can do. Nothing more and nothing less. Don't let people or events burden you. We all have limits and it's ok to realize that there are some things we can't control. Tis life, so Live Your Life.

8

Medications , Stay on Schedule

Take your meds. Plain and simple, no tricks here people. If you are on medications please continue to take them as prescribed. This is a form of self love and good self care.



Surviving and Liking the Holiday Season

We are...

Amida Care wants to make sure that all of our members have the support they need during the holidays. We all know that holidays can be stressful, both emotionally and physically. Through a contract with Beacon Health Strategies, Amida Care has a network of over 4,300 outpatient mental health providers. We also have a number of in-patient mental health and substance abuse options. Seeing a therapist or counselor does not mean you are “crazy”. Often, having someone to talk to relieves stress and can lessen some of the anxiety related to the holidays. If you feel that you might benefit from a referral for mental health and/or substance abuse treatment services, call us anytime at **(866) 664-7142** so we can help you choose the right provider for you.

... Here for you!



Healthy Eating DURING THE HOLIDAYS

By Dr. Nancy Muñoz

During the holidays, we have a tendency to over eat, drink, and indulge in every conceivable manner. After all, the holidays are only one-time a year, right? With parties and ‘get-togethers’ around every corner, how can we say no to the host?

Let’s take a hard look at the importance of making daily healthy food choices and some tips to manage the temptation lurking at every turn.

Nutrition Basics

Good nutrition is important for your health and immune system. It keeps your body working well and supports your medications and other therapies. Good nutrition can impact your quality of life; it provides you with an instant burst of energy. Take a few minutes to think about what foods you eat (get a good mix of different types of foods), how much of them you eat (avoid too much of any one food), and how often you eat them (find an eating plan that fits your schedule). Remember, the ultimate goal is to maintain your body as healthy as possible.

Meal Planning and Eating Tips

Always (regardless the time of the year), focus on high quality foods that will provide your body with a variety of carbohydrates, fat (healthy choices), protein, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants to help promote well-being.

While eating frequent meals is a strategy that works for most, eat at least three meals a day. Listen to your body, when you feel like you have

had enough, stop. Drink plenty of fluids, limiting alcohol and caffeine. Balance what you eat at parties with what you eat during the day. If you think you are going to indulge on some fatty, salty guilty pleasures, eat extra healthy before and after the party.

Using **MyPlate** guideline (www.choosemyplate.gov) is a great way to balance foods in a healthy eating plan. During meals, fill one half of your plate with fruits and vegetables and the other half between grains and protein.

When assembling your plate, remember that: Vegetables are a major source of fiber and vitamins. Items like sauces, additional butter, and margarine add additional fat and calories, but not additional nutrients. When using canned vegetables, use the low sodium varieties.

Fruits are also loaded with fiber and vitamins. Fruits are very flavorful and a healthy way to indulge. Adding fat, sugar and processed flour makes fruit less healthy. A fruit salad or smoothie is healthier than pastries and pies (also much lower in fat and sodium).

Grains (starches) provide vitamin, iron, and other nutrients the body needs to function. As grains are processed, they lose fiber and nutrients. White grains such as white bread, white rice, and flour tortillas are not as wholesome as whole grain varieties.

Proteins are the building blocks of the body. Breading and frying makes food less nutritious. Lunchmeats and cold cuts are high in fat and sodium.

Dairy foods (low fat or non-fat) are rich in calcium. If you are lactose intolerant, low lactate products can be helpful. Food items such as yogurt, cheese, and other fermented products contain less lactose than fresh dairy products. To be on the safe side, read your labels as “milk solids” are sometimes added to yogurt. If it has added milk solids, find another product. Milk solids contain high amount lactose.

Approximately 30% of the total calories consumed daily should come from fat. Fats are a source of energy and provide the body with vitamin E and essential fatty acids, which keep cells and tissue healthy. Just remember that not all fats are created equal. Fats liquid at room temperature are called unsaturated fats. Unsaturated fats include polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. These are the healthy fats that should be included in your diet. Food sources like canola and olive oil, nuts, seeds, and fish are examples of good fats. Consuming a moderate amount of these fats can be good for your heart and circulatory system. Indulging in foods high in saturated fats can be bad for you.

Saturated fats are solid at room temperature and are found in items such as the visible fat in meats and poultry, butter, cheese and ice cream. A diet high in fat can contribute to malabsorption. When this happens, the body cannot digest the fats consumed causing gastrointestinal discomfort. A diet high in fat can also contribute to increased cholesterol and triglycerides in your blood stream increasing your risk for heart disease.

Bringing a healthy food item such as a salad, fruit plate, or vegetable dish to share to every gathering you go, gives you one healthy food to choose from.

Eating a healthy snack before going to a party can help to ease your hunger. Stock up on power foods! Prepackaged snacks, which have a tendency to be high in refined sugar, can be full of empty calories that leave you feeling sluggish. Power

foods such as fresh fruit (great source of fiber and energy); dried fruit (rich in iron and fiber), fig bars (these are low in sugar and fat), and string cheese (low in fat compared to other cheeses, high in calcium and protein) are a nice way to get a quick and satisfying energy boost.

Remember that food safety plays a big role in the food choices you make. Raw eggs, unpasteurized eggs, sushi, and undercooked meats must be avoided.

Do not let your commitment to consume a healthy diet feel like you cannot enjoy the holidays. After all, healthy eating is part of your life-style!



Dr. Nancy Muñoz,
DCN, MHA, RD, LDN
Clinical Nutrition Manager
Genesis HealthCare LLC



Most of the art comes from art therapy programs within our sponsor's ADHC sites. These groups are lead by an Art Director/Therapist trained to teach/guide individuals who want to expand their horizons artistically through drawing, painting, sculpture, photography and/or any media offered by the site. Each year, Amida Care offers a *Live Your Life* event focused on art therapy so that all members have access to an art therapist and facilitator.

The 2013 Art Calendar is Here!

Once a year we prepare for one of our most exciting events, the Amida Care Calendar Art Contest. Members of Amida Care and clients attending AIDS Adult Day Health Care programs (ADHC) are eligible to submit their artwork. This year we received over 160 entries from members and ADHC clients. Our office was bursting with beautiful art!

On October 10th, our Member Advisory Council (MAC) came together to review and select the winning art to be included in our gorgeous calendar 2013. Here are some photos of the occasion.





The art for our calendar is selected by the Amida Care Member Advisory Council (MAC) which is comprised of sixteen members. Their role is to judge the art in a fair and impartial manner. The judging is done in a three round process as follows:

- 1st round: all MAC members select art that best represents life, healing and/or our mission.
- 2nd round: selection of art pieces with the most votes; and
- 3rd round: selection of eighteen art pieces that earned the most votes. The top two images with the most votes will represent the front and back calendar covers; the remaining twelve images will represent January through December.



The calendar raises awareness about the Plan and its membership, and includes important tips and reminders about health promotion and preventative strategies. Also, it allows our members to tell part of their story of moving forward to health and healing, and through their artistic abilities, share their experience with others.

You can get your 2013 calendar at your ADHC site, your doctor's office or clinic. Also, you can call Member Services at 1-800-556-0689 and request a copy.

Please visit our website for a listing of ADHC programs:
www.amidacareny.org/adhc.htm

Holiday "Survival Tips"

The holidays can wear you out. This is especially true for people living with HIV/AIDS. Not only do you have to worry about the usual stressors of your health, medications and finances, but you are often asked to take on many other responsibilities such as activities and celebrations.

The following are a few suggestions for eating better, managing fatigue and stress, maintaining an exercise program and remembering the spiritual reasons for the season.

1

Eating Better: Proper nutrition over the holidays is always a challenge. It is not so much that the food is not nutritious but that there is too much of it. For years, people with HIV/AIDS didn't worry about the weight gain. In fact we actually encouraged it. However, we know better now. We know that many people living with HIV/AIDS can gain too much weight as well as the wrong kind of weight – fat.

It is also known that thanks to the medications, many people with HIV/AIDS are developing secondary complications such as high cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood sugar (due to insulin resistance), as well as high blood pressure, kidney complications and liver disease. This does not mean that you are not allowed to go to parties and dinners and eat and have a good time. It means you should try very hard to limit your fat and sugar intake as well as limit your portion sizes.

2

Avoiding Fatigue: Is it even possible to avoid fatigue? In people with HIV/AIDS the answer to that question is going to range from yes for some people to never for others, with most being someplace in between. The best advice I can give you is to eat right, exercise, get plenty of rest and to monitor your fatigue and energy level and then do what is necessary to keep yourself healthy and happy. It might be helpful if you plan ahead so that you can limit your exertions and avoid getting too tired. You may have to plan to excuse yourself from a party early so that you can go home and get to bed.

You may have to limit the number of parties and functions you go to. You could ask the host if there is a place you could lay down for a little while if necessary. Limiting or avoiding alcohol, cigarettes, and other recreational drugs will also help you to manage your fatigue. You may want to avoid gatherings that are incredibly stressful for you. It can also be helpful to learn how to say "no." When you have HIV/AIDS, it is very easy to overextend yourself, physically as well as financially. It is not selfish to say "no," but rather an act of self-preservation.



3 Exercise: Exercise is one of the first activities sacrificed during the holidays, whether or not you have HIV/AIDS. Why is that? Well for one thing many people see exercise as being kind of an extra. If they have time then they will exercise. In reality, for most Americans, it should really be viewed as a necessity, especially if you have any medical conditions such as HIV/AIDS. It becomes even more important if you have medication-related issues such as high cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood sugar, and lipodystrophy/lipoatrophy.

For most people exercise should be just as important as eating, sleeping and brushing your teeth. Be patient with yourself and do not get frustrated. Do not overextend yourself. Most important of all is to remember that doing something is better than doing nothing at all. You are better off doing a short workout then missing it completely.

4 Stress Management: Stress is a major problem over the holidays as well. It is also a puzzle as to why this time of year causes so much stress and mental anguish when it should be a time of fun and joy and togetherness. Well, okay, maybe it's not really such a puzzle. There are often too many bad memories of holidays past, there are people we don't want to be around, and the holidays are expensive. They are expensive for everyone but if you are on a fixed income or most of your disposable income goes to pay medical bills or for medications, then the cost of the holidays can become stressful.

When you have HIV/AIDS, it is important to try to keep the stress out of your life at all times but especially over the holidays. Stress has a tendency to weaken your immune system and make you more susceptible to injury and illness. It is possible to limit your activities. If you feel you have to go to various functions, whether they are work-related or with family or friends, then find a way to control how much time you have to spend there. One way to help with the financial stresses is to get creative



and make some cards and gifts for your friends and family. It can be as simple as baking some treats to getting out your needle and thread and making ornaments or some other kind of decoration. Some crafts and homemade gift ideas take some planning ahead so that you actually have time to make them.

5 Remember the Spiritual: It does not matter what your religious beliefs (or non-beliefs) are. Find a way to explore the reasons we as a society have been celebrating the winter holidays and why these holidays are important to you. Living with HIV/AIDS often brings many people back to their spiritual roots. Only you can decide what you feel and believe. Take the time to meditate on the season and what it means to you as you continue to live with HIV/AIDS.

The holidays will bring loads of food, fun, fatigue, stress and the lack of exercise. How you choose to deal with each of these issues will play a role in how you enjoy the holidays. It is important to eat right, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and manage your stress level to make the most of your holidays and come out healthier than ever. Make the most of the holidays and enjoy yourself, your family, your friends and your co-workers. Remember the best revenge on HIV/AIDS is living not only a good long time, but living a good healthy time.

*Taken from: The 30-Day Mad Dash of December,
By Glenn R. Preston From Body Positive
Source: www.thebody.com/content/art31124.html*

Beautiful Skin

by Yolanda Owens

Everyone knows that eating fresh fruits and herbs can enhance both health and beauty, but you may be surprised to learn that they also make excellent ingredients for beauty products. Your skin is a significant indicator of your overall health. It is the largest organ in the body. "If you can't eat it don't put it on your skin".

SQUASH

The veggie works from the inside out, thanks to its rich supply of pH-balancing and skin-cell-turnover-boosting vitamin A. Promotes cell turnover, so your skin doesn't become dry, rough, and scaly. *How to Use: Juice fresh squash and apply juice on skin, leave for 5 minutes and rinse.*



PLAIN YOGURT

It can also reduce pore size, improve overall skin texture, and give you that healthy glow. Yogurt is so mild that even those with highly sensitive skin can use it every day. *How to use: Apply fresh GREEK Organic PLAIN yogurt to skin, allow to sit up to 5 minutes, rinse. Use once a day.*





HONEY

Honey's ability to absorb and retain moisture. Honey absorbs impurities from the pores on the skin, *How to Use: Apply warm honey to skin, allow to sit up to 3 minutes, rinse. Use once a month.*



CUCUMBERS

Cucumber helps in reducing swelling around the eyes or the big dark circles under your eyes. *How to use: Cut cold cucumbers in half and apply under eyes, allow to sit up to 3 minutes. Use once a week*



APPLES (APPLE SAUCE)

Apples can protect you from the UV rays and are helpful in removing the dead skin cells. *How to use: Apply plain applesauce to skin, allow to sit up to 5 minutes, rinse. Use once a month.*



STRAWBERRIES

They clear up acne and oiliness. Strawberries are great for your skin because they are a natural source of AHA's - Alpha Hydroxy Acids. AHA's exfoliate your skin, dissolving the dead skin cells and leaving your skin fresh and renewed. *How to Use: Juice fresh strawberries and apply juice on skin, leave for 5 minutes and rinse.*



SOUR CREAM

It naturally removes dead skin to promote new skin cell generation, even out skin tone and reduce the appearance of fine lines. it can increase the skin's sensitivity to sunlight, so be sure to use sunscreen when using sour cream in your beauty routine. *How to use: Apply fresh PLAIN sour cream to skin, allow to sit up to 5 minutes, rinse. Use once a week*



AVOCADOS

According to Avocado.com, avocados reduce the appearance of age spots, help reduce signs of skin aging and heal dry skin and eczema. proven to reduce the appearance of age spots, scars and sun damage *How to use: Apply fresh avocado to skin, leave on up to 5 minutes and rinse. Use once a month.*

continues on page 22

the Natural Way



PAPAYA

Papaya is abundant in anti-oxidants due to the huge concentration of Vitamin A, It helps in removing blemishes, dark spots, evens out your skin tone and brings a glow to your face. *How to use: Apply fresh papaya to skin, leave on up to 5 minutes and rinse. Use once a month.*



TOMATOES

Tomatoes have cooling elements to soothe raw skin, astringents to remove excess oil, and tons of vitamin C and A to brighten dull skin and restore its health. *How to Use: Juice fresh tomatoes and apply juice on skin, leave for 5 minutes and rinse.*



CARROTS

Carrots are good for the skin because of their high vitamin A and beta-carotene content. They help to remove toxic build-up inside the pores and boost the tone of the skin. Carrot oil can protect against the signs of aging. *How to Use: Juice fresh carrots and apply juice on skin, leave for 5 minutes and rinse.*



BANANAS

Dry Skin. Banana peels are used as a natural remedy to help soothe psoriasis and eczema. Banana peels rubbed on fine lines and wrinkles help diminish their appearance and prevent new lines from forming. The vitamin C and other antioxidants present in bananas and their peels help increase circulation in the skin and boost collagen production. *How to use: Apply a mashed banana to skin, leave on up to 5 minutes and rinse. Use once a month.*



OATMEAL

Oatmeal whisks away dead cells, irritation, and redness, leaving a soft, moist glow behind. It is as effective for relieving dryness and inflammation, including insect stings, rashes, and eczema. Oats are filled with natural cleansers (called saponins) that gently remove dirt and oil from the pores. *How to use: Apply cooked cool-down oatmeal to skin, leave up to 5 minutes and rinse. Apply once a week.*



YOLANDA OWENS

has been making her own natural skin care products for 9 years. In 2003, Owens founded iwi fresh at the prompting of family and friends who believed her products were much better than the skin care lines that found in stores. She is also passionate about educating people to take care of their skin naturally. iwi fresh products are currently sold at the iwi fresh Garden Day Spa and www.iwifresh.com website. Or by calling 404-577-8072.



Q&A with Amida



Q I heard there is a program called HEAP that helps with heating?

A HEAP is a federally funded program that issues heating benefits to supplement a household's annual energy cost. HEAP also offers an emergency benefit for households in a heat or heat related energy emergency. Additionally, HEAP offers a heating equipment repair and/or replacement benefit for households with inoperable heating equipment.

HEAP may help you pay for Electricity, Propane, Natural Gas, Wood, Oil, Kerosene, Coal, or any other heating fuel.

Questions regarding the HEAP program should be directed to your Local Department of Social Services Office or the NYS HEAP Hotline at 1-800-342-3009 or 311. You can also visit www.otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/

Q Does Amida Care provide food and clothing support?

A Amida Care does not provide direct food and clothing support, however Amida Care member services can be called at 1800-556-0674 and a member services representative will gladly provide you with contact information where such benefits can be accessed. Please feel free to call the Emergency Food Assistance Program 1-866-888-8777.

Q Why does Amida Care mail me a Medicaid Recertification Reminder that HRA has already mailed as well?

A Amida Care mails additional friendly reminders to members whose recertification due date is closely approaching. Amida Care also has extended support to members who request help in processing Medicaid reminders, either by calling a toll free number or by walking into one of our local offices.

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
1-866-752-5443 or
1-646-786-8650



**You deserve to be
healthy and happy!**

After the

HURRICANE SANDY WAS A NATURAL DISASTER THAT WILL HAVE AN IMPACT LONG AFTER THE STORM HAS PASSED.

The damage caused by Hurricane Sandy is enormous. It is likely that you or someone close to you has been seriously affected by this disaster. The storm's horror can affect you whether you lived it, saw it on television, or heard about it from other people. It is natural to have reactions to such a scary event. You may have problems sleeping or concentrating. You may feel worried, become cranky or cry easily. These symptoms can make it hard to take care of your daily business or keep you from enjoying the company of other people. Symptoms may begin immediately or appear up to a month later and last for several days.

You can feel better by doing the following:

- Be patient with yourself and those around you.
- Try to get enough sleep; eat regular, healthy meals; and be physically active.
- Try to stick to your daily routine as much as possible to give yourself a known routine.
- Talk to people about your feelings and experiences.
- Limit your use of alcohol, and do not smoke or use drugs in response to your feelings.
- Limit your television watching. It is important to have information, but do not increase your worries by watching too many television news shows of the storm damage.



e Storm

It is normal to have symptoms that last for a few weeks. However, if symptoms last for more than a month or they get worse, call Beacon Health Strategies at 866.664.7142 or talk to your doctor.

Your children will need you to explain what is happening. Children may feel afraid, worried or sad, and their behavior may change. They may become clingy, aggressive, or complain of aches and pains when, in fact, they are not sick. Be aware of any appetite changes, problems sleeping or nightmares. Allow children to talk about their feelings when they are able, and listen and accept their feelings without judgment. Try to keep normal routines, spend time together and let your children know that you love them. Also, it is important to protect children from seeing too many scary images and hearing upsetting stories about Hurricane Sandy on television, the Internet and in the media. Limit their television watching about the event, especially before bedtime.

Please do not hesitate to ask for support. We want to assist you. We can be reached at tel. 866.664.7142. Other places to get help in your area are enclosed.

HURRICANE SANDY RESOURCES

New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

- www.dhSES.ny.gov/oem/event/sandy/contact.cfm
- Hurricane Sandy Helpline: 888.769.7243

FEMA-Federal Emergency Management Agency

- Disaster Assistance: 800.621.3362

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's website

- www.governor.ny.gov

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

- www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov
- SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline (free and confidential service): 800.985.5990
- TTY for hearing impaired: 800.846.8517

The United Way

- www.211.org
- New York City residents:
 - Call 211 or 212.639.9675
 - www.nyc.gov/apps/311
- Long Island residents:
 - Call 211 or 888.774.7633
 - www.211longisland.org/pdf/Hurricane%20Sandy%20Information%20Updates.pdf
- Hudson Valley residents:
 - Call 211 or 800.899.1479
 - www.hudson211.org/cms

Mental Health Hotline

- 800.985.5990

LIFENET

- New York City residents: 800-LIFENET
- TTY for hearing impaired: 212.982.5284

Thursday, December 27
3:00pm – 5:00pm

Promesa/ACACIA
915 Westchester Avenue
Bronx, NY 10459

Transportation:

Take #2 train to Intervale Avenue,
walk approximately two blocks to
Westchester Avenue.



Wednesday, December 19
3:00pm – 5:00pm

El Faro East, Harlem United
179 East 116th St., 3rd Flr
New York, NY 10029

Transportation:

Take #6 train to 116th St. and
Lexington Ave. and walk to
building #179 on the 3rd Floor.



Members may bring one guest.

**Supplies, Gift bags, great food
and MetroCards are available.**

RSVP required, please call
1-800-556-0689



MEDITATION
for LIFE



SACRED
AFRICAN
DANCE

Please join us as
we usher in the
New Year in meditation
and dance to
West African beats
with Nafisa!