

ART & other health issues



The British HIV Association (BHIVA) produces medical guidelines about HIV treatment.

This is one of four leaflets about the 2015 guidelines on antiretroviral treatment (ART). This is leaflet 3 of 4.

Other health issues covered in the ART guidelines are:

- Tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis B and C, cancer, kidney disease, bone health, heart disease, and mental health.
- Neurocognitive disorders. HIV can sometimes affect the brain. This includes memory and thinking clearly or problems doing simple tasks.

Key for the strength of guideline recommendations

! Strongly recommended. This advice should almost always be followed.

○ A recommendation based on less evidence. It might apply in some situations.

GPP A recommendation based on expert opinion. Even with limited evidence, this is something most doctors should follow. GPP stands for “good practice point”.

Important recommendations in the guidelines

HIV and TB

! If you have active TB you should be on ART. But if your CD4 count is low, TB drugs may be started first. Depending on your CD4 count, your doctor could treat your TB first and may delay ART for up to twelve weeks.

HIV and hepatitis B (HBV)

! ART is recommended if you also have HBV. ART should include drugs that work against both HIV and hepatitis B. These drugs are tenofovir, emtricitabine (FTC) and lamivudine (3TC).

ART will keep your CD4 count higher and reduce HBV damage to your liver.

HIV and hepatitis C (HCV)

! ART is recommended if you also have HCV. HCV can cause serious liver damage. This risk occurs more quickly in people who are HIV positive.

GPP Your doctor will assess you for type of HCV treatment.

! New direct acting antivirals (DAAs) are more effective with fewer side effects than pegylated interferon plus ribavirin. Checking for drug interactions is important.

HIV and cancer

- ! Specialist care is essential to manage HIV and cancer. HIV increases the risk of some types of cancer. HIV drug interactions with chemotherapy should be double-checked.



HIV associated neurocognitive impairment

HIV can sometimes affect the brain. This might mean that you have problems thinking about or doing simple tasks. ART could help avoid this.

- ! You should start ART, but efavirenz should be avoided.

Chronic kidney disease

- ! ART is recommended if you have kidney disease, even if you have to have a kidney transplant.

GPP Some meds are not recommended, including tenofovir and atazanavir. Some drugs can be used with reduced dosing.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD)

- ! Smoking increases the risk of heart attack, stroke and other health problems. Health benefits from stopping are important for HIV positive people. Some HIV drugs (including abacavir) are not recommended if you have a high CVD risk.

Mental health

- ! Efavirenz is not recommended if you have a history of depression. Some studies reported that efavirenz increases the risk of depression and suicide.

Bone disease

- ! Tenofovir is not recommended in people with poor bone health (osteoporosis). Older age and other factors affect bone density. Tenofovir also reduces bone density. Very thin bones increases the risk of fracture.

The other three leaflets on the 2015 guidelines are:

1. Overall ART guidelines for HIV.
2. Changing ART. Including viral rebound, drug resistance and adherence.
4. What's new in the guidelines. Including young people, women and later life.

Further information and support

Community organisations in the UK that produce HIV treatment information and resources include HIV i-Base (i-Base.org.uk) and NAM (aidsmap.com).

About BHIVA

BHIVA is an organisation for health professionals in the UK. Members include doctors, nurses, researchers, pharmacists and community advocates. Since 1995, BHIVA has been committed to providing excellent care for people living with and affected by HIV.

BHIVA is a national advisory body on all aspects of HIV care and provides a national platform for HIV care issues. To help promote and monitor high standards of care, BHIVA publishes a range of clinical guidelines: www.bhiva.org/guidelines.aspx

Information about how BHIVA guidelines are developed: www.bhiva.org/ClinicalGuidelines.aspx
