

## **Diabetes and HIV Aids**

HIV attacks the CD4 helper cells which are responsible for keeping us healthy, thus weakening a person's ability to fight new infections. Although there are medications to slow the disease's progress, spread to uninfected persons, and delay/prevent the onset of AIDS, victims are susceptible to other health conditions.

Research shows that people living with HIV are up to 4 times likely to suffer from type 2 diabetes among other chronic diseases compared to those without.

Although type 2 diabetes is commonly associated with lifestyle choices, age, and family history, some people living with HIV develop diabetes at younger ages even without being overweight.

### **So, is Diabetes a complication of HIV/AIDS?**

Yes, diabetes is a common complication of untreated HIV/AIDS and or its medication.

Some doctors have linked HIV to insulin resistance. Increased levels of blood sugar, also referred to as hyperglycemia, is a common side effect of some medicines that treat HIV& AIDS. Another effect of these medications is weight gain. In most cases, increased body fat increases the risk of developing diabetes.

Many people living with HIV are also diagnosed with hepatitis C, an infection that leads to inflammation and thus playing a big role in diabetes development.

Since HIV attacks the immune system, opportunistic infections such as cytomegalovirus, alterations in hormone or cytokine levels, and interactions of HIV's protein Vpr with proteins responsible for glucose transport within cells, can all lead to diabetes.

To prevent type 2 diabetes, people living with HIV/AIDS should have their blood glucose levels checked before taking HIV medicines and treatment. It is also very important to test blood glucose after starting HIV treatment. If the test shows a high glucose level, then there is a need to change the HIV medication.

If you're HIV+ and you have some worries about contracting diabetes, talk to your doctor about these risks and the various measures you can take to protect your health. Meanwhile, exercise regularly, eat right, and most importantly, take your medicines exactly as prescribed.

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