

Crypto: You Can Prevent It!

Cryptosporidiosis, or “crypto,” is a disease caused by a tiny germ that is spread in feces.

It can lead to severe illness or death in people with HIV. People who get crypto have watery diarrhea, stomach cramps or an upset stomach, or a fever. You

can get crypto by putting things in your mouth that have touched the feces of people or animals infected with it. Even after symptoms go away, you may still carry the disease, meaning you can give it to someone else.

No drug cures crypto, but symptoms can be treated with HIV medicines. Protect yourself by:

- Washing your hands.
- Practicing safer sex.
- Being careful around animals.
- Being careful when swimming.
- Washing and/or cooking your food.
- Drinking safe or bottled water.
- Taking extra care when traveling.

If you think you may have crypto, talk with your health care provider.

Source: CDC (www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/brochures/crypto.htm).

Managing Skin Rashes

Drugs that fight HIV can sometimes cause skin rashes. Most are mild, but others can be more serious or life threatening. With mild skin rashes, you and your doctor may decide to change your HIV treatment regimen. Depending on the type of rash, other drugs may be needed so you can continue your HIV treatment regimen. Talk with your doctor before stopping or making any changes to the HIV drugs you take.

With severe rashes, your doctor may stop your anti-HIV medications. It's important to identify the drug (or drugs)

that likely caused the rash. You may never be able to take the problem drug again. Being exposed to it may lead to even more severe reactions—or perhaps death—in the future. The key is to contact your doctors if you notice a skin rash. They can advise you on how best to manage the rash.

Source: TheBody.com (www.thebody.com/content/treat/art12787.html).

HIV Symptoms in Women

For women living with HIV, it's important to look out for symptoms that give clues about their health. Unfortunately, many women are unclear about why symptoms occur. Others are unaware of the course that symptoms may take. Some symptoms are subtle and require careful follow-up with health care providers. It's important to talk with providers to track changes over time.

Common Symptoms

Symptoms in women with HIV may be different than those seen in men with the virus. Women with lipodystrophy or body fat changes are more likely than men to have breast enlargement and shifts in stomach fat. Women are also more likely to have headaches and fatigue. These problems are sometimes related to HIV disease or stress.

Women with HIV often have more stomach and pelvic problems than women without it. Gynecological symptoms

often come up earlier for women with HIV. This may be a sign of advancing infection.

Self Assessment & Self Care

Self assessment and self care are important for women living with HIV. Self assessments aren't always done because some women focus more on self care. For many women, self care is the only approach they learn to deal with their symptoms. Different self care strategies are often used. These may include complementary therapies or other treatments that their health care providers give them.

Women are often caregivers themselves, typically for children or other loved ones. This can be a problem. It may reduce or limit their ability to focus on their own HIV-related health needs. Studies of women with HIV who have children show that they often have problems keeping clinic appointments. They also have trouble managing their symptoms. The key is to talk to others. Monitor symptoms closely and get the help that's needed when symptoms occur.

Source: TheBody.com (www.thebody.com/content/treat/art2529.html).

Healthy Living With HIV

Smoking & HIV Why You Need to Kick the Habit

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www.patientedu.org/hiv

Smoking & HIV

Why You Need to Kick the Habit

Smoking rates in people with HIV are significantly higher than in the general population. Smoking can cause your lung function to become worse. For people with HIV, smoking is even more troublesome. Smoking can make it more difficult to fight off serious infections.

Know the Risks of Smoking

Smoking weakens the immune system. It can make it harder to fight off HIV-related infections. This is especially true for lung infections. This is a risk of smoking tobacco as well as marijuana. Having HIV increases the risk of chronic lung disease. Smoking can also interfere with how medications are processed by the liver. In some cases, smoking can worsen liver problems, such as hepatitis.

Smoking & Opportunistic Infections

People with HIV who smoke are more likely to get opportunistic infections related to HIV. Here are some examples:

- Thrush.
- Whitish mouth sores (*also known as oral hairy leukoplakia*).
- Bacterial pneumonia.
- Pneumocystis pneumonia, or PCP.

For women, smoking raises the risk and severity of infection with human papillomavirus, or HPV. This can up the risk of cervical disease. The bacteria that cause *Mycobacterium avium complex*, or MAC—another opportunistic infection—are also linked to smoking. The bacteria are found in tobacco, cigarette paper, and filters, even after they are burned.

Source: TheBody.com (www.thebody.com/content/treat/art6104.html).

Consider the Side Effects

People with HIV who smoke are more likely to have problems related to using HIV drugs than those who don't.

Those who smoke are more likely to get nauseous or vomit when they take their HIV drugs.

Smoking also increases the risk of some long-term side effects of HIV disease and treatment. One example of that is osteoporosis, which is a weakening of the bones that can lead to fractures. Smoking can also up your risk of heart attack.

It's important for people infected with HIV to quit smoking in order to decrease their risk of heart attacks and stroke. In fact, recent studies have found that quitting smoking reduces heart attack risk in people with HIV more than other factors, such as making changes in the drugs they take.

There are many excellent reasons to quit smoking, especially if you have HIV. The key is to be committed and get help from others.

How Do I Quit?

Smoking nicotine is highly addictive. It's very tough to stop the habit. There is no one way to quit smoking. Different strategies work better for different people (see Table to the right). You and your doctor may come up with a combination of approaches that work best for you.

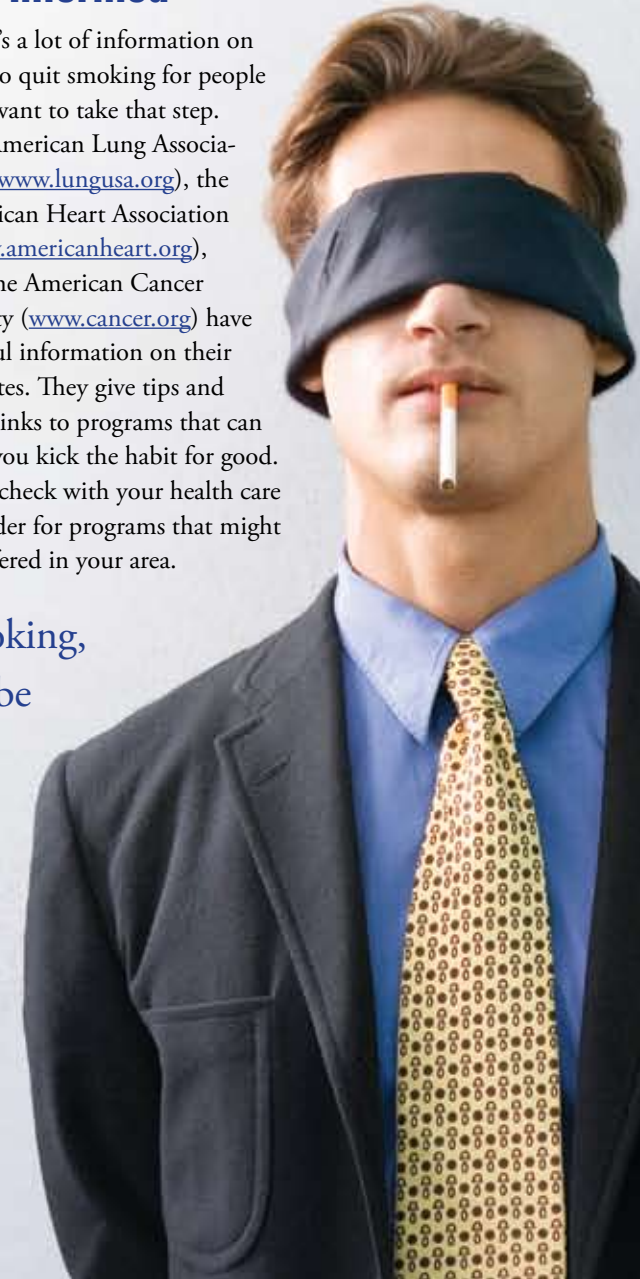
Some people quit smoking "cold turkey," stopping the habit altogether. Others need some support. This can come from drugs that manage the physical symptoms of withdrawal.

There are drugs available at your local drug store or

supermarket, while others require a prescription. Gums and lozenges that reduce nicotine cravings are often available over the counter. Prescription drugs include inhalers, nasal sprays, or pills. Other therapies deal with the psychological addiction to smoking. Combining approaches may improve your chances of quitting.

Get Informed

There's a lot of information on how to quit smoking for people who want to take that step. The American Lung Association (www.lungusa.org), the American Heart Association (www.americanheart.org), and the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org) have helpful information on their websites. They give tips and have links to programs that can help you kick the habit for good. Also, check with your health care provider for programs that might be offered in your area.



Tips to Quit Smoking

Talk with your health care provider

- Your doctor can help you learn about how to stop smoking.
- You'll most likely be asked questions to help best determine which method will work for you.
- Ask your doctor whether prescription drugs, such as a nicotine patch or drugs to decrease cravings, are right for you.

Change your daily routine

- If you smoke with your coffee in the morning, change to tea or another non-alcoholic drink.

Reward yourself when you do quit

- Reinvest the money spent on cigarettes in healthy or favorite foods or relaxing activities.

Make rules

- Don't allow smoking in the car, and remove the ashtray and lighter.
- Don't smoke in the house.
- Buy only one cigarette pack at a time.
- The hardest thing to do is to be committed. Try to get help from friends and family. Don't go about quitting the habit alone. Take advantage of the help that's available.

Do not try to quit when stress is already high

- Use stress-reduction techniques to help you handle quitting. These techniques include exercise, massage, deep breathing, bubble baths, and even safe sex.
- Drink lots of water and fruit juices or herbal tea to flush out your system.

Source: TheBody.com (www.thebody.com/content/treat/art32603.html).