

HIV/AIDS Medical Care

HIV infection is a serious condition that requires ongoing medical attention.

You should get treatment for HIV regularly even if you feel well and do not have any opportunistic infections. Letting down your guard and not monitoring how HIV affects your body may put you at risk for further harm to your immune system.

Trust between a doctor and patient is very important. Selecting a provider you are comfortable with and who is familiar with your situation gives you a better chance of managing your HIV successfully. How HIV behaves in your body now and how it behaved in the past can affect your future treatment. A provider who understands your history will best be able to help you.

Where Can I Access Medical Care?

-Los Angeles County Facilities: The nine county clinics offer comprehensive HIV/AIDS medical care and additional services, such as disease monitoring and psychosocial services.

-Health maintenance organizations: Your health insurance plan may cover HIV/AIDS medical care. To find out, check with your member services department.

-Private practitioners: If you have private insurance, you may have access to an HIV medical provider. The American Academy of HIV recognizes certain providers who have knowledge and skills in delivering HIV medical care as AAHIVM HIV specialists.

-Community Clinics: Clinics throughout Los Angeles County offer comprehensive HIV medical care at no charge or based upon your ability to pay and some specialize in HIV treatment.

What Kinds of Services are Available?

-Early Intervention Programs: Following an HIV diagnosis but before starting treatment, you may want to consider enrolling in one of these programs that are designed for people in the early stage of HIV.

-Monitoring: Your CD4 cell count, viral load and vital signs (weight, blood pressure, etc.) all need to be checked regularly to gauge the effectiveness of your treatment plan.

-Development of treatment plans: Your primary-care provider will work with you in deciding on treatment options. In 2010, there are 28 FDA approved anti-HIV medications, and you and your provider can choose a medication combination that is right for you.

-Medication: Your treatment plan may include medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as well as enrollment in clinical trials for experimental HIV treatment.

-Treatment adherence services: Many providers who offer HIV medical care also offer services to help you correctly and consistently take your medication.

-Nutritional counseling: Nutrition is an important part of your treatment plan and many HIV clinics offer nutritional counseling or can provide a referral.

-Preventive care: Some clinics offer programs and workshops to help patients detect cancer, obesity, diabetes and other medical conditions before they become life-threatening.

What are the Costs of Accessing Care?

If you have little or no income, you should be able to access care at no charge or for a small co-payment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.hivla.org for the most up-to-date HIV/AIDS Medical Care listings.

-Contact the American Academy of HIV Medicine at www.aahivm.org or (866) 241-9601

-Contact the California Office of Managed Care Helpline at (888) 466-2219

If HIV medical services are not delivered appropriately, please contact OAPP's warmline @ (800) 260-8787.