

Side effects / NAM.**Contributors**

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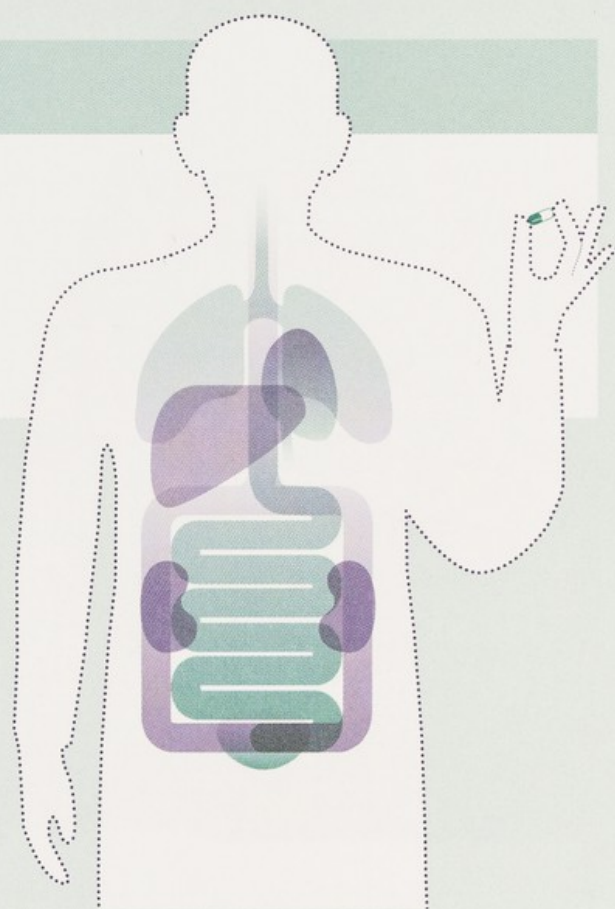


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the basics

side effects



As well as keeping HIV under control, anti-HIV drugs may also affect your body in other ways. Any extra or unwanted effects are called 'side effects'.

Short-term side effects

The most common side effects are the result of your body getting used to a new drug. After a few weeks, these side effects usually go away.

● Diarrhoea



● Feeling sick



● Feeling tired



● Disturbed sleep

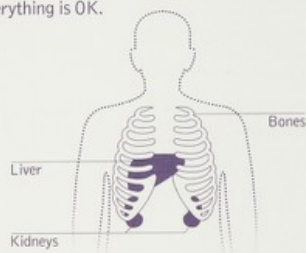


You can often take other medicines to limit these side effects. A few people find that these side effects don't go away. If this is the case, you can talk to your doctor about changing your treatment.

Long-term side effects

Side effects that have long-term consequences for your health are less common.

- Make sure your clinic does regular tests on your liver, kidneys and bones to check that everything is OK.



- There should also be tests for your cholesterol and glucose. Raised levels could mean you are at higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure or a stroke.



- Changes to your body shape (losing or gaining fat in specific places) are less common than in the past. Doctors now try to avoid using the drugs that cause these problems.



If there is a problem, it may be worth making changes to your lifestyle, taking an extra treatment or changing your HIV treatment.

Important points

- The most common side effects are short term, and can often be managed with medicines.
- Long-term side effects are less common.
- If side effects are causing you problems, talk to your doctor about them. It may be possible to change your treatment.

Notes

Allergic reactions

- With two anti-HIV drugs, a very small number of people have an allergic reaction in the first days or weeks of taking them.
 - The most common symptom is a rash, but your doctor will give you more detailed information about what to look out for.
 - If you have these symptoms, it's essential to get medical help urgently.
 - The two drugs are abacavir (*Ziagen, Kivexa, Trizivir*) and nevirapine (*Viramune*).
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Want to find out more?

For more information on this topic:

- read NAM's booklet 'Side-effects'
- read Terrence Higgins Trust's booklet 'Your Treatment', or
- speak to an adviser at THT Direct (phone: 0845 12 21 200).

For more information about HIV, NAM provides free fact sheets, information booklets, e-mail bulletins, a monthly newsletter, a comprehensive website (**aidsmap.com**) and a website specifically for people living with HIV (**namlife.org**).

Contact us by calling 020 7840 0050 or by sending an e-mail to info@nam.org.uk

Has this resource been useful to you? Please let us know what you think by visiting www.aidsmap.com/feedback, by phoning us or by sending an e-mail. Your feedback helps us to improve the services we offer you.

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