



Eliane

Facts about HIV and lifestyle

- Smoking is bad for any person's health, but even more detrimental for people living with HIV.
- Any medication, including HIV medication, has possible side effects and some of these effects increase with an unhealthy lifestyle.
- Regular exercise and a diet with fresh vegetables and fruits are beneficial for cholesterol levels and counteract some of the side effects.
- A good balance between physical exercise and relaxation is important, as well as managing stress levels and getting enough sleep.

A healthy lifestyle

One can have a serious health condition and follow a healthy lifestyle at the same time. This is only good to improve the quality of life and health!

Improving one's health through a healthy lifestyle requires some patience and perseverance. After years of living with diabetes and HIV, I increasingly felt the urge to live and see my children grow up. If there is anything I can do to prevent from getting worse, I am prepared to give it a good try. And it was about time to take action. I was on so many medication for different diseases and I was worried about the future of having even more health complications. It was a wake up call, having a heart attack in 2015 and losing my brother Melance due to diabetes complications in that same year. I had to do something about my health issues and change my lifestyle to a healthier one. I decided to do sports and to go to the gym twice a week, I changed my diet to healthy food, reduced alcohol consumption and went swimming once a week and take a sauna bath. I have a choir rehearsal every week and I continue my dancing and singing. I started feeling better. And even really good! I was so happy when my cardiologist was telling me the good news that I could stop the medication I was using and that blood pressure and cholesterol check-ups can be done by my GP. This was the first tangible positive result of my change of lifestyle. Then the diabetes specialist said that if I could level down my hypoglycaemia, I can also reduce to one tablet instead of four! So, I decided to do even more sports and started using an eating app, which helps me to count my calories intake per day.

I picked up other sportive activities and started weekly training for walking 20 kms in the Night of the Refugees for fundraising. It's a positive motivation to help others while I am also helping myself! After my sugar level had gone down, I could indeed reduce that medication too. I am very happy and proud as well as my healthy lifestyle pays off now. Because of the fact that I could reduce a lot of the medication I was taking in 2015, it had become possible to change the HIV medication too! In the past years several regimens were not possible because of interactions between the different medicines. Since it had become possible to reduce some of the pills I was taking, I can now have a one single pill a day regimen for HIV.

This is because of the efforts I made by doing more exercise and control my diet. I used to think that it was not possible but step by step and with a positive attitude I managed. The physical exercise is good for me and I enjoy doing it as well. Besides that it is good for my health, it makes me feel happy.

Hiv Vereniging

The Dutch Association of People Living with HIV (Hiv Vereniging) represents the interests of all people with HIV in the Netherlands, irrespective of background.

We provide information about living with HIV and organise all kinds of meet-ups.

Servicepunt

Our team of expert volunteers can be contacted for any question about living with HIV, by telephone on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 14:00 – 22:00 hrs, or by email: servicepunt@hivvereniging.nl.

See www.hivvereniging.nl