

Hi Folks!

What an amazing wrap-up to 2023. On behalf of the team at Pozhet a BIG thank you for being part of it.

Welcome to our final edition of the Pozhet Client Newsletters for 2023. As we reflect on the year, I wanted to share some highlights.

We launched our Pozhet in-language factsheets, in collaboration with our colleagues at Multicultural HIV & Hep Service (MHAHS). We translated 'HIV & Ageing', 'HIV & Relationships' and 'HIV & Having a Baby' into 10 key languages – all are available on our website, have a look if you haven't already.

Our ongoing collaboration with Positive Life NSW, including partnering to offer +CONNECT. The feedback from clients who have attended +CONNECT has been overwhelmingly great! If you are keen to meet other folk living with HIV, this is a marvellous option.

Feel free to get in touch, if you wish to attend future +CONNECT events.

The launch of our Pozhet video which aims to reduce the stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV, perpetuated by the general community. We are pleased to report more than 255,000 views for the first video. Once again, a warm thank you to the Pozhet clients who generously committed their time and insights to the production. We look forward to sharing more episodes in the New Year.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge World AIDS Day on 1 Dec, with this year's theme being – Let Communities Lead! A sentiment strongly underpinning our work here at Pozhet.

Wishing you and yours a healthy and safe end of year break. Enjoy!

Brooke and Pozhet Team

Does HIV increase the risk of developing bowel cancer?

Age is still the greatest risk factor for bowel cancer when living with HIV. However, factors such as smoking and ongoing inflammation have been found to increase the risk of developing bowel cancer.

Some studies have found that living with HIV is associated with being diagnosed with bowel cancer at an earlier age and that the cancer can progress quicker compared to the general population. Overall these studies have not found that more people living with HIV develop bowel cancer.

In short HIV doesn't increase your risk of developing bowel cancer; inflammation, lifestyle factors and age influences this more.

Bowel cancer is the second largest cause of cancer-related deaths in Australia, with the largest increase in risk between 50 and 74 years of age. For this reason all Australians receive a free bowel cancer screening kit in the mail every two years between these ages.

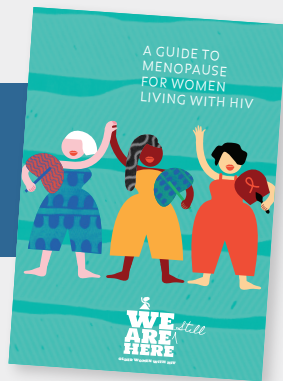
It is important to remember that in Australia 90 per cent of bowel cancer, if caught early can be treated successfully. So early detection is even more important to prevent the potential of faster progression in people living with HIV.

If you smoke and/or have had long periods of inflammation and are under 50, chat to your doctor about whether bowel cancer screening would be recommended for you. If you are between 50 and 74 and haven't completed the test you received in the mail, **there is no time like the present.**

However, if you have never received a screening kit, talk to your doctor or order one online at: www.health.gov.au/our-work/national-bowel-cancer-screening-program



Menopause and HIV



What is menopause?

Menopause is a natural process in a woman's life when her period stops.

A woman reaches menopause when she has not had a period for 12 months in a row. This usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55 and the average age is 51. Some studies suggest that women with HIV may experience menopause earlier, but there is limited data to confirm this.

Menopause occurs because the ovaries have run out of eggs and stop producing two hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. Menopause can also happen when the ovaries are removed during an operation or if they're damaged by certain medical treatments. Perimenopause is the time of transition leading up to the final period and can last one or several years. During this time hormones go up and down leading to different symptoms.

Symptoms

Some studies have shown that women living with HIV are more likely to experience more severe menopausal symptoms. However, every woman experiences their menopause differently and symptoms can vary depending on your health, lifestyle, cultural background and family history.

Some symptoms of menopause can be similar to some symptoms of HIV, for example night sweats. Therefore, women with HIV sometimes find it difficult to distinguish between their menopausal and HIV symptoms and worry that their HIV is no longer under control.

The most common symptoms of menopause include: hot flashes, night sweats, mood changes, forgetfulness, poor concentration, tiredness, insomnia, headaches, joint pains, sore breasts, dry vagina, reduced sex drive, itchy skin and weight gain.

How to manage menopause

There are different ways to help manage menopause symptoms and to improve your quality of life, such as eating a healthy balanced diet and doing regular exercise.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is the most effective treatment to reduce menopausal symptoms. It replaces the hormones that your body has stopped producing. There are many HRTs that can be given to women living with HIV.

It is important that you talk to a healthcare professional about your symptoms, treatment options and potential benefits and risks, so that you can make an informed decision.

Resources

Sophia Forum in collaboration with Dr Nneka Nwokolo (an expert on HIV and menopause) has developed ['A Guide to Menopause for Women Living With HIV'](#)

Positive Life NSW makes all the difference



In NSW, there are many useful clinics and services that take care of all the medical needs of people living with HIV. However, have you ever wondered about the non-medical aspects of living with HIV, such as social events, conversations, support, retreats, counselling, personal experiences, employment, workshops, dinners, celebrations, and more? Wouldn't it be amazing if the people offering these non-medical activities were people living with HIV themselves?

Positive Life NSW is an organisation run by people living with HIV, for people living with HIV. Everyone at Positive Life lives with or is personally affected by HIV. We really understand what it's like to have HIV. Sometimes it's about finding the right services, working out how to get what you really want from your healthcare providers, finding work, or support to tell a partner about HIV. We know the challenges that can make it difficult to manage our health, because like you, we also live with HIV.

Our women's groups, men's group, mixed social events, online discussion groups and large annual events offer people living with HIV opportunity to talk with each other, share experiences and find answers together. If you want to make new friends with HIV, talk about how and when to disclose, or just talk with others who are facing some of the same decisions and issues you are, the value of getting support from someone living with HIV can make all the difference.

Get in touch today!

(02) 8357 8386, 1800 245 677 (freecall)
or contact@positivelife.org.au

Get Healthy Service

Getting healthy is just a call away.

If you're over 16 years of age, live in NSW and would like to have better health, the Get Healthy Service is for you. Free health coaching to reach goals that matter to you. You do it from home, at a time that suits you.

The program includes 6 or more regular confidential coaching calls with a university qualified health coach, who will help you set and work towards your goals. Your coach will send you emails and text messages to encourage you and remind you when appointments are coming up.

When you join Get Healthy, you get a customised plan to help you create healthy habits.

The program can support you to:

- eat healthily
- get active
- reduce the amount of alcohol you drink
- reach and stay at a healthy weight
- gain a healthy amount of weight in pregnancy

Learn more about the Get Healthy Service:

Call 1300 806 258 Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm

<https://www.gethealthynsw.com.au>

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Healthy Eating & Active Living

Thai Curry with Rice

www.healthyliving.nsw.gov.au

Time 20 mins

Serves: 4

Rating: Easy



Ingredients

- 2 cups basmati rice (or microwaveable rice)
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1/3 cup red curry paste
- 400 ml can coconut milk (reduced fat if available)
- 2 chicken breasts diced into 1 inch pieces
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 red capsicum, sliced
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce (optional)

To serve (optional):

- 1 bunch fresh coriander
- 1 red chilli
- 1 lemon

Method

1. To make rice, boil 2 cups of rice with 3 cups of water on high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered for 12 min or until liquid is absorbed. Turn off the heat and allow the rice to rest for 5 min. Then, fluff with a fork to separate grains.
2. While rice is cooking, heat oil in a large frying pan on medium heat. Add curry paste and cook for 1 min. Then, add coconut milk and bring to the boil.
3. Add chicken and cook for 5 mins. Then, add peas and capsicum. Cook until vegetables are tender and chicken is cooked. Stir in fish sauce if you are using it.
4. Serve curry with rice. Top with chopped coriander, chopped chilli and a lemon wedge, if desired.

NB: If you don't have basmati rice, use whichever type of rice you can find in your supermarket or have at home. Quick microwaveable rice will also work.

Quiz

1. "What comes in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in a thousand years"?
2. There are two ducks in front of a duck, two ducks behind a duck and a duck in the middle. How many ducks are there?
3. How many months have 28 days?
4. $6 \div 2 (1+2)$
5. There are three major Health awareness events in Australia, during December, What are they?
6. Who were the winners for 2023 AFL & NRL Grand finals? And who was the winner of the NRLW Grand Final?
7. Is the HIV self-testing kit available in Australia?
8. What is the NSW co-payment wavier?
9. What was Health Equality Matters formerly known as?
10. What do you get if you cross a duck with mistletoe?

Read & Watch recommendations



- **The Visitors**
Jane Harrison
- **The Spider and Her Demons**
Sydney Khoo
- **Killing for Country**
David Marr
- **The Dictionary of Lost Words**
Pip Williams
- **Beckman**
Netflix
- **Old People's Home For Teenagers**
ABC
- **Sherwood**
ABC
- **Hidden Assets**
SBS on demand

If you have any recommendations for movies, must-read books or binge-worthy TV series, email them to us for the next newsletter at pozhet@pozhet.org.au

Answers to Quiz

1. M
2. Three.
3. All of them
4. 9
5. - World AIDS Day – 1st December
- International Day of People with Disabilities – 3rd December
- Decembeard – Be Bold for Bowel Cancer
6. Collingwood, Penrith & Newcastle Knights
7. Yes
8. NSW Health pays patient co-payments for some section 100 (s100) drugs and medicines to help ease the financial burden for people with cancer and other chronic conditions including HIV)
*Must be eligible for Australian Medicare card.
9. AFAO - Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations
10. Christmas Quacker



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