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## Natural alternatives to the AIDS/ARC conditions: Conclusion

*Maintenance of acute infections is critical, but it is never  
too late to begin healthy living and long-term  
immune-support programs*

BY STEVEN BAILEY, N.D.

**A**lthough no one has found a "cure" for AIDS, we are not without direction. The benefits of practicing safer-sex and avoiding the sharing of needles in drug use are well known and were discussed in previous articles. To conclude this series, I provide information on optimizing immune health.

## Health

### Nutrition

Diet and nutrition unquestionably influence the immune system: general diet affects health, and specific nutrients are associated with the immune system. We are all individuals; rates of absorption and need for specific nutrients vary. The information following represents average needs.

### General diet

A diet that is good for one of the body's systems is generally good for another. For example, an immune-strengthening diet will also benefit the heart, the musculoskeletal system, and so on.

Five substances are needed (in addition to oxygen) to maintain life: fat, protein, carbohydrates (sugars), fiber and water. The way in which these are obtained greatly affects health.

The consumption of too much protein and fat harms not only the cardiovascular system but

the immune system as well. Adequate protein intake is virtually guaranteed in a whole-foods diet. Fish, beans (soy, tofu), low-fat cottage cheese and yogurt are preferable to red meat, poultry and high-fat dairy. Nuts and seeds (especially raw sunflower seeds) can be a good protein source if one's diet isn't already high in fat.

Cutting down on fat is important. Which fats we consume, how much fiber we eat and how much exercise we get all affect utilization of fat. Two specific fats, linoleic acid and linolenic acid, are needed. Natural fats (raw sunflower seeds, fish oils, olive oil, nut oils and dairy) are preferable to margarine and polyunsaturated fats. (See *Fats and Oils*, by Udo Erasmus.)

Carbohydrates are divided into two groups: simple and complex. Simple carbohydrates include sugars (cane, fruit and honey); complex carbohydrates include most whole foods (breads, vegetables, grains and beans). There is nothing wrong with moderate intake of simple sugars, but one should increase one's overall intake of complex carbohydrates. Dark green and orange vegetables are particularly important. Start with one mixed green salad (not iceberg lettuce) or a steamed or sautéed mixed vegetable dish every two days.

A diet of primarily whole foods supplies all the fiber needed, but bran, psyllium seeds and oat bran are excellent fiber supplements.

Adequate intake of fluids is essential to good health. Foods supply a lot of fluid, but getting an additional 4-6 glasses per day is considered important. Coffee, alcohol, soda pop, black tea

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