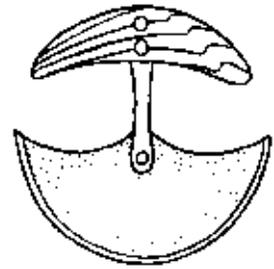


## Information for Inuit Community Members

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### Fact Sheet HIV/AIDS Resistance



## WHAT IS HIV/AIDS RESISTANCE?

### What is HIV/AIDS resistance?

Resistance is the term that means an HIV drug no longer works in the body of someone who is HIV positive. This happens because the Human Immunodeficiency Virus in that person has mutated (changed) meaning that the drugs are no longer able to kill the virus.

### How does resistance develop?

HIV Resistance can be caused by two things:

1. When people don't take their medication regularly, there is not enough medication in the body to fight the virus but there is enough for the virus to "get used" to the medication. The virus then mutates (changes) and becomes resistant to the medication.
2. Resistance can develop, though much more slowly and over long periods of time, even if people are taking their medications regularly (taking all medications on time every day). This is a natural kind of resistance and is much slower to develop than the first kind.

### Are there different types of resistance?

**Yes.** There are two different types of HIV medication resistance.

**Natural Selective resistance** – This type of resistance develops naturally even though a person takes their medications on time and regularly. This resistance is natural and not related to the how the medications are taken or prescribed, although sometimes medications will have to be changed in order to fight it.

**Unnatural Selective resistance** – This resistance comes from the HIV virus "getting used" to the drug because the drug is not being taken often enough, or in dosages big enough.

### Can you be tested for resistance?

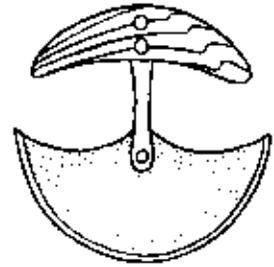
Yes. There are several different tests that can be done to see if your HIV is becoming resistant to the medications you're on. If you think you may be resistant to some HIV medications, or you have not been taking your medications often enough, talk to your doctor about being tested for HIV resistance.



## Information for Inuit Community Members

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### Fact Sheet HIV/AIDS Resistance



### Why is it important to know about resistance?

It is very important to know about resistance so that your doctor can change your medications if necessary in order for you to avoid getting sick or developing AIDS.

### What is cross-resistance?

Cross resistance happens when the HIV in your body becomes resistant to one type of drug you are taking and because of this has become resistant to other drugs that you haven't even tried yet. This usually happens if one drug is similar to another drug. Cross resistance is important to know about because it can limit your options for medications. Often doctors can determine if cross-resistance is taking place and fight it by giving you a new drug that is very different to the ones you are on.

### What can be done to avoid resistance?

Always take your medications on time. You should never miss a dose if you can help it. If you have missed doses, it is important to tell your doctor so that he can test for resistance and prescribe another medication if necessary.

Even if you are taking your medications on time, you should be tested often to see how HIV is affecting your body. These tests, called viral load and CD4 tests, can help determine how rapidly HIV is multiplying in your body and if resistance to the medications you are on is developing. Most doctors suggest taking these tests every three months.

### Can other medications for other diseases cause resistance to HIV?

**No.** But other medications can interfere with your medications and make them less effective. Even some natural medications can do this. It is important to talk to your doctor before starting any new medications or herbal remedies. Your doctor can determine whether the medications you are about to take will interfere with your HIV medications.

### What else can I do about resistance?

The best thing to do is always take your medications on time and go to your doctor regularly. If you do these things, HIV resistance can be detected and action taken to fight it.

