

**Part Two**  
**Common problems in people aging with HIV**

**Chapter 9**  
**Lung disease**

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**Section I. Lung disease and its importance**

**9-1. Why might people aging with HIV have lung disease?**

Lung diseases are more common in people with HIV. They are more likely to have lung cancer, lung infections, and emphysema (problem breathing because you cannot blow out air). This is because other than common causes of lung disease like smoking, the virus itself also damages lung tissue over time.

**9-2. What happens when you have lung disease?**

Lung disease makes it hard to breathe and do the things you enjoy. Some can cause pain or death, like lung cancer. Because lungs are connected to the heart, you may also have heart damage if your lung disease is not well controlled.

**Section II. Lung disease: what to do with your doctor**

**9-3. Tell your doctor if you are short of breath**

Shortness of breath can be serious. Do not chalk it up to age. Tell your doctor, even if shortness of breath goes away once you rest. If ignored, shortness of breath may occur even when you are resting and never get better again. Deal with shortness of breath as early as possible to prevent lasting damage on your lungs.

**9-4. Ask if you need vaccines**

Get a flu shot every year, since flu can cause serious complications in people with lung disease. Also get vaccines against pneumonia (a type of lung infection). Severe pneumonia can cause decreased function and death, so it is better to prevent it than to treat it after it happens.

## **Section III. Lung disease: what to do on your own**

### **9-5. Take your medicine correctly**

Take the right amount of pills at the right time of day. If this is difficult, use a pillbox or ask someone to remind you. Also, show your doctors how you use inhalers to make sure you are using it correctly. The right pills and inhalers can help relieve cough and problem breathing.

### **9-6. Eat a healthy diet**

Eating proper food and keeping a healthy weight are important. Being too heavy can make it hard to breathe. But, being too light might mean you are not eating the right food to keep lungs healthy. To plan a balanced diet, ask to see a nutritionist.

### **9-7. Exercise**

Exercise expands your lungs and helps them stay strong. Even a bit of exercise helps. Any type of exercise is better than none. If you are not sure where to start, ask to see a physical therapist. They can teach you breathing exercises that reduce shortness of breath and allow you to do more.

### **9-8. Do not smoke cigarettes**

Smoking causes lung problems and many other diseases. Do not smoke, and avoid secondhand smoke if you can. If you plan to quit smoking, ask doctors for help. Also, avoid things that may upset your lungs, like paint fumes and car exhaust.

### **9-9. Avoid sick people**

Lung disease makes it hard to heal from lung infection. Avoid sick people if you can, and wash your hands often.