

# FITTING ALL THE PIECES

Central Michigan District Health Department  
HIV/AIDS Case Management Program

March 2009

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## What If I'm Unable To Speak For Myself?

Before you get sick, it's important that you put in writing the instructions for what kind of treatment you would want and who could make decisions for you if you could no longer communicate your wishes.

Many people assume that their family members would automatically be able to make decisions about medical treatments and life-sustaining measures if they were to become incapacitated. This is not always true!

Rules vary greatly from state to state but in some cases, decisions are left up to doctors and institutions unless you have appointed someone as your legal representative. If the decision falls to family, your family members may not always agree on medical treatment issues, which could lead to extended court battles over appropriate treatment, particularly regarding end-of-life issues.

Ideally you should have a range of the following documents that describe how you want medical and financial decisions handled if you can no longer make them yourself:

- **A health care proxy and a living will**

While each document serves a unique purpose, they work best together. In many states they are combined into one "advance directive" document.

Generally, the most important document to have is the **health care proxy** (in different states, you may hear it called a "durable power of attorney for health care," "medical power of attorney" or "appointment of a healthcare agent"). This document allows you to name someone you trust—such as a spouse or friend—as your "proxy or agent" to make health care decisions for you if you are unable to communicate your wishes because of temporary or permanent illness or injury. This person can generally make almost any medical decision you would and can respond to changing circumstances.

A **living will** has a more narrow scope than a health care proxy. It describes the type of care you want to receive as you near the end of your life in specific circumstances. It typically goes into effect only when your doctor certifies your health condition and that you are no longer capable of making decisions ("incapacitated"). You may also hear a living will called a "directive to physicians," "health care declaration" or "medical directive." It works best as a guide for your agent and physicians.

- **Power of attorney**

A "power of attorney" is a document that allows another person (your "agent" or "attorney in fact") to make property, financial and other legal decisions on your behalf. Your agent may play an important role in your health care, as he or she can pay for health care, choose health insurance policies for you and appeal coverage denials.

You may appoint the same person to be in charge of medical and financial decisions, but to do so requires two separate documents.

Your doctors should make note of your living will and health care proxy in your medical record, and you should give these documents to the hospital upon each new admission. If you are going to be taken to the hospital by ambulance, take these documents with you if you can.

## Catrina's Corner

Spring is all most here! It might not seem like it right now, but it is coming and I don't know about you, but I am so ready for it. So, while we're looking toward spring cleaning and organizing our homes, let's also look toward organizing our lives. Some things that may be good for you to think about are legal issues...power of attorney, living wills, etc. I know that this may not be the most fun topic to think about, but it certainly is an important one. Lucky for us, we will be having a respected lawyer from the community available at our March support group to discuss these issues with us and answer any questions that we all may have. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Speaking of spring cleaning...I've noticed that I don't have budget worksheets for most of you. I definitely need these on file before I can help with any emergency funding situations that may arise. I've enclosed a worksheet along with a stamped envelope. All I need you to do is fill it out front and back and return it to me asap. Thanks a bunch and think spring!

## Clinic Dates

March 27, 2009

8:30 am - 4:30 pm

April 24, 2009

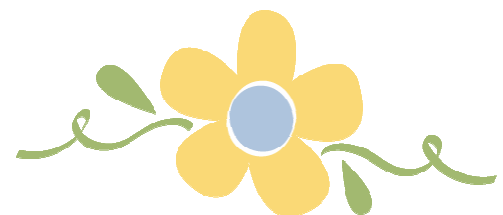
8:30am - 4:30pm

May 22, 2009

8:30am - 4:30pm

Clinic is located on the 2nd floor of the courthouse in Harrison. Look for the Family Planning clinic sign

March 20th is the official first day of Spring!!



Commitment To Change

Ready.

Willing..

And Able...

Making Health A Priority



# KATI'S TIPS - The Truth About Supplements

Vitamins and minerals are important. They help your body to work properly and protect you from increased risk of infection. As an HIV-positive individual it can be difficult to receive adequate amounts of these nutrients when you don't eat enough calories each day or if you do not eat a wide-variety of foods. If this is the case, a multivitamin/mineral supplement might be right for you; however, before you go and purchase your first bottle of supplements there are a few things you should know.

- **Supplements are like insurance.** Your body absorbs vitamins and minerals differently depending on where they are coming from. Vitamins and minerals from food are usually absorbed better by your body so you should always try to get your vitamin and mineral requirements from food sources first! Supplements should never replace a meal or be used as your only way to meet your requirements.
- **You don't need to buy the name brand or more expensive supplement.** When it comes to a multivitamin, you can go generic. The generic brands are cheaper and contain the same ingredients as the more expensive

ones. Don't pay more for a name.

- **Avoid multivitamin supplements that contain "extra" ingredients.** Many multivitamin supplements today contain extra *herbal* ingredients that are supposed to enhance the supplement in one way or another. Avoid these! They typically cost more money and can be potentially dangerous to individuals on HIV medications because they can alter the way your medication works. Especially avoid anything listing St. John's Wort or Echinacea on the label.
- **Take your supplement as recommended on the label or by your pharmacist.** Many vitamins and minerals can cause negative effects if too much is taken. Read the label or talk to your pharmacist about your multivitamin supplement and follow the directions precisely.

**Ensure and Boost are also considered supplements.** If adding another pill to your regimen is something you want to avoid, adding a liquid supplement may be more to your liking. Ensure and Boost supplements are just two types of liquid supplements out there and they come in a variety of fla-

vors. Add them to your diet as a snack or drink along with a meal. Not only do these supplements contain many of the vitamins and minerals your body needs, but they are also rich in calories as well. These supplements are typically more expensive than the pill variety.

This month's meal is rich in a wide variety of nutrients because it incorporates many different food groups. By eating meals like this one, you will easily begin adding those necessary vitamins and minerals to your diet through food.



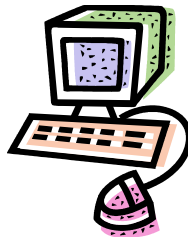
## Support Group

- March 16, 2009** Wills, Power of Attorney
- April 20, 2009** Dr. Gulick/Carol Salisbury  
\* location change
- May 20, 2009** Cooking with Kati  
\* date and location change
- June 15, 2009** To Be Announced
- July 20, 2009** Independence Day Picnic  
\*location change

Support Group meets 5:30-7:00pm. Call Catrina at 989-539-6731 ext. 8221 for location and directions

## Websites

- [www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com)
- [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org)
- [www.michigan.gov/documents/miseniors/AuthorityAct\\_194202\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/miseniors/AuthorityAct_194202_7.pdf)
- [www.medicareinteractive.org](http://www.medicareinteractive.org)



## Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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