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**All you have to  
decide is what to do  
with the time that is  
given you  
- Gandalf, Lord of  
the Rings**

## A Hidden Danger - Trans Fat

Trans fat is as dangerous to your heart as saturated fat, but many food labels aren't currently listing it! It increases your LDL (bad) cholesterol, and lowers HDL (good) cholesterol. What is this stuff? Trans fat is created artificially, by bubbling hydrogen gas through vegetable oil. This is called "hydrogenation," and sometimes you'll see "partially hydrogenated oil" as a food ingredient.

Why even bother with hydrogenation? Well, trans fat is easier to use for deep-frying. It also makes oils more solid so that baked good and margarine come out less oily and more solid. In short, its easier for food manufacturers to use trans fats than to avoid them.

In July 2003, the FDA issued a new regulation requiring manufacturers of food products to list trans fat separately. Manufacturers had until January 1, 2006 to comply with this new rule, and trans fat will start showing up soon on food labels. When the numbers are there for all to see, the manufacturers might be more motivated to change the type of fat they use. This has already happened with many margarine products, which got a lot of bad publicity due to their trans fat content.

What foods include high levels of trans fat? You'd expect to find it in doughnuts, fruit pies, microwave popcorn, crackers, cookies, as well as shortening and spreadable vegetables oils - and you'd be right. But it's also hiding some places you might not expect, like some brands of frozen waffles, cereals and in some name-brand puddings. Some french fries are bad and others, not so bad. McDonald's has reformulated its fries to reduce the amount of trans fat.

How can you reduce your intake of trans fats? First, cut back on the most likely sources: margarine, shortening, deep-fried fast foods and snack foods, and commercial baked goods including pies, cookies, and crackers. The lowest levels of trans fat are usually found in low-fat or reduced fat foods. But be careful: foods can be labeled as "extra lean" or "low in saturated fat" without considering their trans fat content. If they're "saturated fat free," they contain almost no trans fats. Here's a surprise: most potato chips are not made with partially hydrogenated oils, so they don't contain trans fats. Most peanut butter also includes very little trans fat. Look for partially hydrogenated oil in the ingredient list. If it's near the top of the list, avoid that food. Soft or liquid margarine probably has a lot less trans fat than solid brands.

Start watching food labels for trans fat to monitor your intake. You should see the listing showing up soon!

*From HIV Consumer Report 2004 (page 14)*

## 10 Thoughts for Whole Living

1. Let yourself make small mistakes. Happiness is not *found* in perfectionism.
2. Healthy food is good for you and the *environment*.
3. The breath is the link between body and soul.
4. Don't hold your *body* hostage. Allow it to *move* and stretch.
5. Meditation is not an esoteric skill - it's a natural *instinct*.
6. Rediscover the *pleasures* of old fashioned physical work.
7. Your body send signals when it is out of balance. Heed them *early*.
8. Become *aware* of your habits; they may not support who you want to be.
9. True beauty *radiates* from joy, wellness, harmony, and inner energy.
10. Life is a series of *moments*. Inhabit every one of them.

*From Body+ Soul (June 2005, p. 69)*

# Helping Others to Help Themselves

By Lane Fischer

I clearly remember the day I was diagnosed with HIV in 1982. My partner and I had both been tested and were both positive. I never once felt overwhelmed or angry as all my energies went toward taking care of my partner's fears. I immediately started educating myself about the disease, although little information was available at the time. I also began volunteer work as a buddy to people living with HIV and later as a speaker to educate about HIV.

Over the years I volunteered for many different agencies, but decided I wanted to do more. I returned to school to become a registered nurse specializing in AIDS care. One month after graduation, my beloved partner passed away. I was 40 years old and beginning a new chapter in my life.

Today I am a triage nurse in an AIDS clinic in Atlanta, Georgia. While working with patients, I try to ensure that I equip them with the lifestyle principles that have been so important in my life. By adopting a healthy lifestyle, including diet and exercise, partnering with my doctor and creating a positive environment, I've been able to focus my energy toward helping others. Since 2003, I have been taking a regimen consisting of the protease inhibitor, Kaletra, and the nucleosides Truvada, Videx, and Ziagen. My treatment regimen has kept my viral load consistently below 400 copies/mL. I have experienced no side-effects and feel healthy and optimistic about the future.

Many times my patients will complain about how frustrating it can be to live with this disease. I encourage them to talk to their doctors about a new treatment therapy or to consider an exercise program which could boost their overall outlook on life. I also find it helpful to talk about what I have learned about HIV in the past 23 years. I know what it feels like when my body reacts poorly to a new medication, or to lie in bed too tired to get up and face the day.

Even though it can be difficult for people with HIV to openly discuss the disease, I believe my impact as a healthcare provider would be limited if I could not share in my patients' experiences. Many times, a doctor or a nurse will tell a patient that they "know what they're going through." I believe that my patients can benefit from what I have to say, because I really *do* know what they're going through.

It is not always easy working with patients who have HIV. It can be sobering to hear a patient speak about their fears, especially when they remind me that I need to fight for my own life every day. But I'm not alone on this journey. I'm often reminded of the numerous friends, healthcare providers, counselors and volunteers who have guided me along the way. With their help, I've learned how to take control of my life and to look forward to the future. Working together, we can face even the most frustrating challenges and can discover new ways to successfully manage HIV. This is the message I try to bring to my patients every day.

*Lane Fischer is a nurse in the Infectious Disease Program at the Grady Health System in Atlanta, GA. He is a member of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC) and the National Honor Society of Nurses. He continues to advocate for increased healthcare for people living with HIV.*

## Your spirit will always be with us...

I would like to recognize a colleague who meant a great deal to me as a friend and a writer for +Nurse — Thom Thiele. Thom passed away in February 2005.

Thom was a regular writer for +Nurse, using his expertise to tackle issues that were pertinent to HIV-infected women. I would often smile when I opened up my email to find two, sometimes three, short articles by Thom — who indicated that he had another "sleepless night." I had the opportunity to get to spend some time with Thom at one of our national conferences, and I was taken by his gentle spirit and wonderful presence. I am certain that those who had the privilege of his presence everyday miss him terribly — I know that in the very short time that I knew him I was "changed for the good."

Thom, I shall miss your passion and expertise — thank you for sharing yourself with each and everyone of us. Peace, my friend.

David J. Sterken MN, CNS, CPNP, Editor, +Nurse

**We will do what we can now with mindfulness and compassion and when we can do more we will.**

**- Motto of the Zen Hospice Project in San Francisco**

## My Journey Continues...

David J. Sterken MN, CNS, CPNP

During the course of our journey we sometimes must make very difficult decisions. Two months ago I made perhaps one of the most difficult decisions of my life - to transition from a patient care role to an administrative position. I cried for several days when confronted with the reality that to continue in my current role meant putting my health at risk. Once again, I was faced with my own mortality and the reality of being an HIV-positive nurse.

The great internal struggle that I felt was not borne by me alone but began in the mind of a wise nursing manager before we sat down to discuss my transition. Michele Pietras is a nursing manager who values each and every one of her employees for their gifts internally as well as externally. Michele's staff is not merely warm bodies filling FTEs, but a carefully handpicked group of individuals whose blended gifts and talents provide safe, exceptional, family-centered care. In her wisdom, she anticipates the needs of her staff, be it emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual, and problem solves with the individual to create a solution which sometimes demands that the individual find gifts that have remained undiscovered.

Making "the decision" is but a part of the process. A wise manager recognizes that just as important is providing an atmosphere of support to ensure employee success. Michele has partnered me with an extraordinary team of individuals who have welcomed me with open arms, easing the pain of my transition.

Fellow sojourners, I offer you hope. Nursing provides us so many opportunities when we find ourselves in the presence of wise managers who value team members for not only their skills and knowledge but for the unique qualities they bring to the team. An employee's "worth" is so much more than the hours they give in the workplace, and a successful workplace is accomplished through the blended worth of many people.

I thank you, Michele, for your wisdom. I hope that my fellow sojourners may bask in such wisdom and know the support that I have found as an HIV-positive nurse.

## May We Suggest...

My friends, may I encourage you to see the movie RENT? Grab some of your colleagues and plan a night out. You cannot help but to be moved by the movie itself and the lyrics of so many of the songs. Here is just an example of the beauty of the music.

There is no future  
There is no past  
Thank God this moment's not the last

There's only us  
There's only this  
Forget regret or life is yours to miss

No other road  
No other way  
No day but today

There's only now  
There's only here  
Give into love or live in fear

No other life  
No other way  
No day but today

No day but today  
(Finale B - RENT)

*Don't worry  
about what the  
world wants for  
you, worry  
about what  
makes you  
come more  
alive. Because  
what the world  
really needs are  
people who are  
more alive.  
- Lawrence  
LeShan*

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We as a committee would love to hear from you. Do you have ideas for articles? We would welcome anyone who would like to submit an article. Deadline for our next publication date is July 1, 2006. Let us know if you are interested in writing an article. Please email us at [anac@anacnet.org](mailto:anac@anacnet.org) with your article.

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***One's philosophy is not best expressed in words. It is expressed in the choices one makes. And the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.  
- Eleanor Roosevelt***