

# Lifestyle Modifications for People on Immunosuppressive Therapy

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## DESCRIPTION

Immunosuppressive therapy is important for managing various medical conditions, such as autoimmune diseases and after organ transplantation. While these medications are essential for controlling immune responses, they can also impact overall health and susceptibility to infections. Adopting specific lifestyle modifications becomes paramount to support immune function and overall well-being for individuals on immunosuppressive therapy.

### Importance of lifestyle modifications

Immunosuppressive therapy involves medications that suppress the immune system's activity. This is necessary to prevent the rejection of transplanted organs or to treat autoimmune diseases where the immune system attacks the body's own tissues. Common immunosuppressive drugs include corticosteroids, calcineurin inhibitors, antimetabolites, and biological therapies. Living with a suppressed immune system requires careful attention to lifestyle choices to minimize the risk of infections and other complications. While medications control immune responses, lifestyle modifications can complement treatment efficacy and improve overall health outcomes.

### Risk factors

Practicing good hygiene is essential to reduce the risk of infections. This involves frequently washing hands with soap and water, particularly before eating and after visiting public places. Avoiding close contact with sick individuals can also lower the risk of contracting infections. A balanced and nutritious diet is important for maintaining overall health and supporting the immune system. This encompasses a range of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. It is also important to avoid raw or undercooked foods that may harbor harmful bacteria or parasites. Regular physical activity helps strengthen the immune system and improves overall cardiovascular health. It is important to choose exercises that are appropriate for health condition and to avoid high-risk activities that may lead to injuries. Chronic stress can weaken the immune system and

increase the risk of infections. Effective stress management techniques include deep breathing exercises, meditation, yoga, and participating in hobbies or activities that encourage relaxation and mental well-being. Immunosuppressive medications can increase the risk of skin cancers and other skin conditions. It is important to protect skin from excessive sun exposure by wearing sunscreen using high Sun Protection Factor (SPF) products, wearing protective clothing, and steering clear of extended sun exposure, particularly during peak hours. Discuss with healthcare provider about recommended vaccinations before starting immunosuppressive therapy. Some vaccines may need to be administered before starting treatment to reduce the risk of preventable infections.

### Causes of immunosuppressive therapy

Immunosuppressive therapy is used to intentionally suppress the immune system's activity. The causes or reasons for prescribing immunosuppressive therapy include a variety of medical conditions and clinical scenarios. Here are the main causes for the use of immunosuppressive therapy:

**Autoimmune diseases:** This autoimmune disorder causes the immune system targets the joints, causing inflammation, pain, and joint damage. Immunosuppressive therapy helps reduce immune activity and manage symptoms.

**Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE):** In this condition, SLE, the immune system attacks various body tissues, causing widespread inflammation and tissue damage. Immunosuppressive drugs are used to control the disease.

**Multiple Sclerosis (MS):** MS involves the immune system targeting the protective sheath of nerve fibers, resulting in neurological symptoms. Immunosuppressive therapy can help manage the disease.

**Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD):** Conditions like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis involve the immune system targeting the digestive tract. Immunosuppressive therapy helps reduce inflammation and manage symptoms. Immunosuppressive therapy is used to control the inflammation. lifestyle modifications play an

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important role in supporting the health and well-being of individuals on immunosuppressive therapy. By adopting healthy habits, managing stress, and staying proactive in healthcare management, individuals can optimize their immune function

and reduce the risk of complications associated with immunosuppression. Working closely with healthcare providers to tailor these lifestyle modifications to individual needs is essential for achieving optimal health.