

The WIHS Woman



The Connie Wofsy Women's HIV Study

WIHS Sex Steroid (or Hormone) Study

By Ruth Greenblatt, MD

Why are we doing a study of hormones in the WIHS?

Several WIHS women have told us that they think HIV may have affected their menstrual cycle and periods. Due to the benefit of new therapies, women with HIV are living much longer and are experiencing the aging process. Since age has major effects on the menstrual cycle we wanted to determine what effect HIV has on menstruation versus what effect age has.

What is the Sex Steroid study?

A woman's period is guided by the ovulatory cycle in which the production of hormones and eggs is directed by communication between the ovaries (small organs that make eggs and are

present on either side of the uterus) and the pituitary (a gland at the base of the brain). When the pituitary senses that the ovary is not making enough estrogen and progesterone (the major female sex hormone), the pituitary increases production of its own hormone (FSH) that instructs the ovary to make more female sex hormones. When the ovary has received enough stimulation from the pituitary it makes its own hormone (inhibin) to tell the pituitary that it got the message. As ovaries age, they tend to respond sluggishly to pituitary hormones, and these changes occur long before menopause. If we measure the amount of estrogen, FSH, and inhibin in a blood specimen taken early in a woman's menstrual cycle, we can assess how well a woman's ovaries are functioning. By using these more precise measures of ovarian function, we should be able to find out if HIV has an effect on the ovulatory cycle, even if the effect is small. These tests are standard clinical tests, so, if you participate in the study, and take your results to your primary care or

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women's health provider, you may be able to get information about how your ovaries are functioning.



WIHS Visit 19 and Sub-Study Enrollment

By Claudia Ponath, Field Manager

The WIHS visit 19 starts on October 1, 2003, and we will continue to enroll WIHS women into the **sub-studies** that started with visit 18: the **Sex Steroid study**, the **Metabolic study** and the **Pharmaco-Kinetic (PK) study**. For all of these studies, your interviewer will fill out an eligibility form at your main WIHS visit, and then our field staff will contact you if you are eligible.

For the **Sex Steroid study**, we are looking to enroll HIV-positive and negative women who are eligible and did not participate in this sub study at visit 18. It's a short visit, at any of our clinics, consisting of a single blood draw, but we have to see you on the second, third or fourth day of your period. We will give you a reminder call a few days before your period is estimated to start. The reimbursement for the Sex Steroid study is \$20. This study measures the levels of certain hormones (estradiol, FSH, and inhibin B) during your period. The levels of these hormones change as a woman approaches menopause. Having more information on women's hormone levels will help us understand the effects of menopause on HIV disease and HIV.

For the **Metabolic study**, we also want to enroll HIV-positive and negative women who are eligible and did not participate during

visit 18. The Metabolic visits are scheduled at Moffitt Hospital on Parnassus Ave in San Francisco. The visit takes about 3 hours and consists of a 2-hour glucose tolerance test (you come in fasting, there is a baseline blood draw, then you drink a sugar solution; after that there are 3 more blood draws over 2 hours) and a DXA scan to measure bone density. The reimbursement for the metabolic study is \$50. The Metabolic study looks at the risk for diseases common to women, such as diabetes and osteoporosis, and conditions that may be more common in women with HIV, such as body fat redistribution and muscle loss.

For the **PK study**, we want to enroll HIV-positive women who are on one or more of these HIV medications: Sustiva, Viramune, Kaletra or Viracept, and who did not do a PK visit for the same drug at Visit 18. This visit may take place either at our Mount Zion clinic in San Francisco or at Moffitt Hospital on Parnassus Ave in San Francisco. The visit consists of having your blood drawn once before and 10 times after taking your HIV medication over the course of 12-24 hours, depending on the medication. A catheter is inserted before the first blood draw, to avoid having to stick you multiple times. The reimbursement for this study is \$150. The goal of the PK study is to learn more about how HIV drugs are absorbed, and what factors influence the absorption and therefore the levels of HIV medication in a woman's body. This information will help us to find out why some women do well on HIV medications, and why other women do not.

The oral study, the anal HPV (Tushie) study and the VRS study will continue as before, seeing those women who are already enrolled.

For your main WIHS visit, we will continue to

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ask you to try and fast before your study appointment, so we can get a more accurate measure of key laboratory tests for things like cholesterol, lipids, and glucose. These blood tests are important markers for diseases that affect women, including diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension (high blood pressure).

There are no major changes for this WIHS visit; the only minor change is that we will ask a short version of the mood questions on form 26 at odd visits from now on.

I would like to repeat an appeal you've probably heard before: please keep your study appointments and be on time for them. Recent budget cuts mean that we really have to make the most of our available clinic slots. Of course we understand that important things come up and you have to change your plans. In that case it is really helpful for us to have as much notice as possible if you need to reschedule; that way we have a chance to schedule another participant in that precious appointment slot.

Also, the Sex Steroid, Metabolic and the PK study visits need to take place within 30 days following your main WIHS visit. Our field staff members will contact you if you are eligible for any of these studies. Please call back quickly – as we have less than 30 days to schedule you. Also, because the Moffitt Hospital clinic has limited availability, it is extremely difficult to reschedule these visits and if you are late or miss your appointment they may not be able to reschedule you.

That said, we thank you very much for being part of the WIHS and for participating in all the different sub-studies. We truly appreciate the time and effort you give to us to making this study a success. We will strive to do our

best to make study visits a pleasant experience for you and to offer you enrollment in these exciting new sub-studies.



A Poem by Tunesha J., 3.29.03

Pain:

When the wind blows do you ever think it will snow?

When it rains don't you think it's a shame?

When you feel how I feel, then nothing can be real.

When you close your eyes at night do you always see your mother and father having a fight?

Then they turn around and tell you everything is all right.

Do you bless your food or just say "that's cool"? Blessed.

Impressed and stressed.

When it snows do you ever think you're getting old, or just too damn cold?

Ashamed is how I feel and I'm just keeping it real, distressed over guilt or disgrace.

Every time I think, picture and look, I feel as if it's not real.

My mind is sealed and my body is ill, and I'm just keeping it real.

My mother and father can't get it right, make up, make love, do something we all know this nothing.

I walk with the wind.

I agree with the snow

And I'm singing in the rain.

Please, somebody help me, I'm in pain.

Travel log: Canada

By Nancy Hessol

In August of this year I had the privilege of traveling to the Canadian Rockies for a 2-week vacation. My husband and I signed up for a 14-day bicycle tour that began and ended in Banff, Canada. We flew into Calgary International Airport and took a shuttle bus into the Banff National Park. This was some of the most spectacular mountain scenery we have ever seen.

Day 1: We learned very quickly, when we were assembling our tandem bicycle outside, that insect repellent was going to be a very important thing to have and use when outdoors. After liberally applying the spray, we did a



Lake Minnewanka

short 25-mile ride around Lake Minnewanka before joining up with the rest of our tour group later that evening. Our first wild life sighting, besides the insects, was a female big-horn sheep and her lamb by the side of the road. We also spotted a Ptarmigan bird in her summer (brown) colored feathers. In the winter, this bird's feathers turn white.



Ptarmigan
Lagopus leucurus

Day 2: We bicycled out of Banff and rode through the lovely Bow River Valley and



Bow River Valley

turned off onto the road toward the Kootenay National Park. In route, we crossed a bridge that had on the top suspension an osprey nest with 3 large baby birds waiting to be fed. We then climbed the pass over the continental divide and began our descent into Kootenay Park. The glacial rivers were roaring alongside the road and the color was an incredible pale blue-green. We had also been told about the numerous forest fires in the Canadian Rockies at that time and could now sense the nearby smoke, ash, and flames. We rode by one fire and onto our destination for the night, the historic Kootenay Park Lodge. We quickly showered and while we waited for dinnertime we saw the forest fire getting closer and closer. Fire fighters came and were hosing down the lodge and the sleeping cabins and then the fire marshals flew in by helicopter. The road was now closed and shortly thereafter we were told to evacuate. So instead of riding to our next day's destination, Radium, we jumped into the tour van and drove there that night.

Day 3: Change of plan due to forest fires, so we went to the cute town of Kimberly and rode back to Radium. We paralleled the head-

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waters of the Columbia River most of the way and by the time we returned to Radium we were too tired to make the uphill trip to the natural hot springs. Maybe next time.



Bow Lake

Day 4: Our ride was to the town of Golden along what is normally a quiet road. However, due to the forest fires and road closures the road we were riding was anything but quiet. After braving the car, truck, and recreational vehicle traffic for the most of the day we arrived at a nice bed and breakfast (B&B) for a two-night stay.

Day 5: A rest and do laundry day; very uneventful.

Day 6: After breakfast we left our quiet B&B and headed back into traffic for the ride to Lake Louise. Fortunately, we found a detour



Lake Louise

on a closed road (don't tell the Canadian Mounted Police) and pedaled the last 10 miles on a quiet back road and crossed the continental divide once again. We arrived at beautiful Lake Louise ahead of schedule and decided to take a breath taking 6-mile hike up to the Tea House at Lake Agnes. At the top we stopped for hot tea before the rain started and the hiked down the mountain. Our hotel at Lake Louise was wonderful and we took advantage of the Jacuzzi and swimming pool before dinner.

Day 7: We only had 40 miles to ride today so we took our time as we cruised along the Bow Valley Parkway. At three different times we spotted Elk along the road and were told to be careful of the males since it was almost rutting (mating) season. We arrived early in Banff and had time to do a load of laundry and do a little gift shopping before dinner.



North American Elk (Cervus elaphus)

Day 8: We were shuttled in the van from Banff to Jasper, where our next day's adventures lay. The drive along the Icefield Parkway was incredibly scenic and we got to preview the riding we would be doing in the next week. We arrived in the quaint town of Jasper, did a little more shopping, saw a real Canadian Mountie,

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and then dodged the rain and thunderstorm by going back to our cabin.



Ride along the Icefield Parkway

Day 9: Another non-bicycling day but we got lots of exercise on our 9-mile hike up Mount Edith Cavell, altitude of 8,000 feet. (This mountain is named after a Canadian nurse who ministered to the sick behind enemy lines in World War I; enemy soldiers executed her.) As we climbed up, we got great views of Angel glacier, wild flower meadows, and the Cavell Glacial Lake. After our descent from the mountain, we went to Athabasca Falls for a picnic lunch. The day ended with more thunder showers and a quick dash for our cabin.



Cavell Lake

Day 10: Back on the bike for the 50-mile ride to Sunwapta Falls. We rode parallel to the mighty Athabasca river most of the day and then starting climbing towards the Sunwapta pass. We went to the Sunwapta Falls, did a short hike, saw a weasel and a jack rabbit, and then returned to our room and got cleaned up for dinner.

Day 11: We awoke to fog and a forecast for rain so we headed out with our bad weather gear and continued on the long climb to the Columbia Icefield. The steeper the road got, the worse the weather became and by the time we got to our destination, it was freezing cold and hailing. We got into our hotel room, warmed up with hot tea and coffee, washed our clothes, and then headed out for the Sno-coach tour of the Columbia Glacier. The weather in the Canadian Rockies is very changeable and, although it was pouring rain as we were driving up the glacier in these specialized snow vehicles, by the time we were ready to disembark and walk around the glacier it was beautifully sunny and there was a lovely rainbow in the sky.



Rainbow over an icefield

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Day 12: Well I thought we were at the summit but we still had another mile to climb until the top. But the weather was sunny, the air was crisp and before we knew it we were speeding down the other side of the pass. You can go very fast downhill on a tandem bicycle and we reached speeds of 45-50 miles per hour several times on this trip. To help slow down the bike to keep the tire rims from over heating due to excessive braking, our tandem is equipped with a third disc brake on the rear wheel. I control this brake and by the end of the day my arm was aching from braking so hard.

Day 13: We started riding just before the Bow pass summit and did a side excursion to the Peyto Glacier and Lake lookout. The sights this day were some of the most spectacular. Peyto Lake was followed by Bow Lake, Mosquito Creek (I decided not to stop there due to the name alone), and Hector Lake. We ended the day's ride at Lake Louise, had a picnic lunch, and headed to Lake Moraine for a canoe ride. We spent the night at our favorite hotel, back in Lake Louise. However, after getting to the room and jumping into the shower our power went out and was off for about 2 ½ hours – this coincided with the big power outage on the East coast of the US and Canada but our outage was actually unrelated and due to a forest fire.



Bow Lake (northern view)

Day 14: This was the same route we rode on day 7, but this time instead of seeing Elk we spotted two bighorn sheep, male and female, under a highway overpass. Our lunch was cut short by too many insects so we pressed on to our final destination. When we arrive at our hotel we said farewell to our guide, disassembled the tandem, and had a quiet dinner by ourselves.

Day 15: We traveled back home to San Francisco.



North Saskatchewan River



Mount Saskatchewan

CAB CORNER



Anna Groskin, CAB Liaison

Sidney Foster and Sheila Bryant, our Northern California WIHS National Community Advisory Board (NCAB) representatives, recently attended the United States Conference on AIDS (USCA) in New Orleans in September.



The WIHS NCAB picks a conference to attend each year, and this time they've decided in head to The Big Easy for a daylong NCAB meeting and the largest conference of AIDS workers in the US. With over

3,000 service providers, people living with HIV/AIDS, policymakers, public officials, funding organizations and other leaders attending, the USCA is the largest AIDS-related gathering in the United States. People gathered in New Orleans this year to discuss and learn about the latest tools and solutions for the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. Sidney and Sheila will share what they learn at the conference in an article in the next WIHS Newsletter.

Closer to home, summer is over and fall has begun! This means it's almost time for the annual WIHS Holiday Luncheon. This year, we will be holding it in the East Bay at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley. Invitations to all participants will be sent out as soon as a date is decided. The Holiday party is our opportunity to thank you in person for being involved in the WIHS, for your time, and on-going participation. We'll have a turkey dinner with all the fixings, door prizes, and musical entertain-

ment! We look forward to seeing you at the party and celebrating the holidays!



New Substudy: Fatty Liver in women with HIV and hepatitis C (HCV)

By: Phyllis C. Tien

WIHS women with HIV and HCV infection, are you interested in learning about the health of your liver?

In the next month, we are going to start recruiting WIHS women with HIV and HCV infection for a substudy to learn about new ways to study fat in the liver. HCV, HIV, certain kinds of antiretroviral drugs, obesity, and drinking alcohol can all cause fat to deposit in the liver. Fat in the liver may speed up the process of getting liver damage or cirrhosis.

If you are eligible, we will ask you to come in for two visits. During the first visit, you will have blood drawn and a MRI scan of your liver. Having an MRI scan is similar to having a CT scan, where you lie in a tunnel, but there is no radiation involved in a MRI scan. The MRI scan will measure the amount of fat in your liver and the amount of fat in your belly.

At the second visit, you will have a liver biopsy done by an expert in liver disease – only if (1) you have not had a liver biopsy done in the last couple years; (2) the MRI scan does not show severe liver disease already; and (3) you do not have a bleeding disorder – the blood that we draw at the first visit will check for this.

A liver biopsy is the best way to find out

about the health of your liver and is recommended in people with HCV, especially if you are thinking about getting treatment for your HCV.

Right now, the liver biopsy is also considered the best way to look at the amount of fat in your liver. We want to see how good the MRI is compared to liver biopsy in measuring liver fat. If the MRI is just as good or better, then maybe in the future, we can use a MRI scan instead of a liver biopsy to follow the amount of fat in the liver.

You will be reimbursed \$25 for the MRI scan and \$100 for the liver biopsy. If you are interested in being in this important study and have HIV and HCV, please call Jane at 415-353-9767 or toll-free at 866-476-5109.



Cooking Lite for the Holidays

The following recipes have been gathered from numerous sources to provide our readers with healthier and good tasting alternatives to those heavier holiday meals.

Seared Turkey Breast with Roasted Root Vegetables and Chardonnay Gravy

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour 5 minutes

6 to 8 servings

1 (4 pound) bone in whole turkey breast

Olive oil

Salt and pepper

2 turnips, halved

2 rutabaga, halved

2 parsnips, halved

4 carrots

2 onions, halved

1 garlic bulb

2 sprigs rosemary

4 bay leaves

8 sprigs fresh thyme

1/2 cup orange blossom honey

2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1 cup Chardonnay

1 cup chicken broth

1 tablespoon flour

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Cut the turkey breast in half and remove the breastplate from the meat. Place the bone in a large roasting pan, drizzle lightly with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. The breastbone will act as a natural roasting rack. Surround it with the vegetables and herbs. Drizzle lightly with oil and season again. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes while preparing the turkey breast.

Coat a large skillet with oil. Over medium heat, sear the turkey breast skin side down until crispy. In a small bowl, combine honey, thyme leaves, salt, and pepper. Remove the turkey from the skillet and brush with the honey paste.

Remove the roasting pan from the oven, then lay the turkey breast on top of the roasted bone. Pour in the wine and chicken broth. Cover with aluminum foil and return to the oven for 30 to 40 minutes. Baste periodically.

Arrange the turkey breast and root vegetables on a serving platter. Heat the pan juices on the stovetop over medium flame. Scrape

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the roasting pan with a wooden spoon to loosen particles from bottom and sides. Mix the flour with 3 tablespoons water to create a slurry and whisk into the pan sauce. Reduce heat and simmer until thickened to sauce consistency, about 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve gravy alongside the turkey platter.

Oven-Baked French Fries with Homemade Ketchup

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 25 + minutes

Yield: 4 servings

Nutrition Info: Low Fat

Fries:

- 4 russet potatoes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt

Ketchup:

- 6 Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and pureed
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion, soaked in cold water for 15 minutes, drained and pat dry
- 4 teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- Add salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Baking the fries: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Peel potatoes and cut into medium (1/2" x 1/2") French-fry size. Place in a zip-

lock plastic bag with the olive oil and massage until potatoes are evenly coated. Coat a Teflon baking sheet with a thin layer of nonstick spray. Place the potatoes on the baking sheet in a single layer and lightly sprinkle with cayenne and black pepper. Bake, turning potatoes once or twice, or until golden brown on all sides. Bake for approximately 25 to 30 minutes. Depending on how thick the fries were cut, baking time may be longer. The thicker the cut, the longer the baking time.

Making the ketchup: Mix all ingredients together in a bowl and set aside. Place ingredients into a blender and mix to a pasty consistency. Set aside for approximately 1/2 an hour. The water from the pureed tomatoes will rise to the top. Skim off water to insure the ketchup will be thick and not a watery runny consistency.

When the fries are done, sprinkle with salt and serve immediately with the ketchup.

Stir Fried Mixed Vegetables

Yield: 4 servings

- 4 cups mixed vegetables, such as broccoli florets, cauliflower florets, carrot rounds, green beans, or radish quarters. Use other vegetables if so desired such as celery, string beans, etc.
- 1 tablespoon salted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons of canned chicken stock

Use a medium size Chinese Wok with a lid if you have one, or a large size Teflon frying pan with a lid. Heat wok/pan over high heat until it starts to smoke. Add all vegetables together

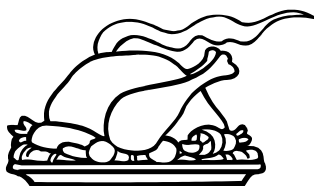
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in wok/pan and stir several times with a wooden spoon. Be careful, the wok/pan will sputter and spit due to residual water on the vegetables. Wait approximately 30 seconds, then add the butter. Remember, butter has a low heat index, and will smoke. Toss the vegetables, by gently moving the pan back and forth for a few seconds. Immediately add the chicken stock to the vegetables. A steam cloud will ensue. If you have a ventilator over your cook top or range, make sure it is set on high. Cover and cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Cooking time will be dependent on how thick the vegetables were cut. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer the vegetables to a serving bowl and serve immediately.

Variations on a Theme:

1. Cook the vegetables in 1 to 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or butter, without the chicken stock. Again, do this over high heat and brown and crisp the vegetables slightly.
2. Add 1 to 2 teaspoons of minced garlic, minced shallot, a teaspoon of grated peeled fresh ginger to the pan before adding the vegetables.
3. Enhance the vegetables at the end of cooking with a tablespoon or so of minced fresh herbs, like chopped flat-leaf parsley, dill, mint, basil, cilantro, or thyme.



Navy Bean Soup

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 2 hours

Yield: 8 servings

1 pound navy beans, rinsed and drained
 10 sprigs parsley
 2 sprigs fresh thyme or rosemary
 1 bay leaf
 2 large smoked ham hocks, about 1-1/2 pounds
 1 medium onion, medium chopped
 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
 8 cups of cold water
 1 medium carrot, coarsely chopped
 Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
 Butter for garnish (this adds calories)

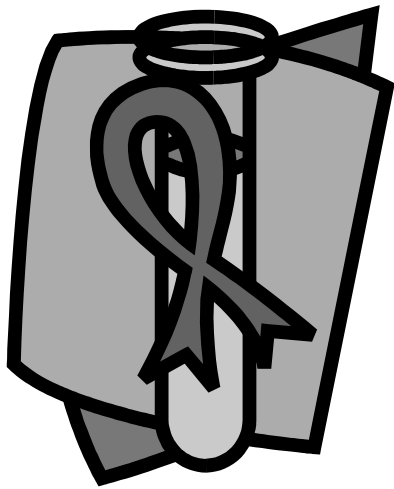
Place the beans in a large saucepan and cover with cold water by about 2 inches. Bring to a boil and lower the heat to a simmer. Cook for 5 minutes; remove from the heat, cover, and let sit for one hour. Drain and reserve. Tie the parsley, thyme, and bay leaf together with kitchen twine (bouquet garni).

In a large soup pot or Dutch oven combine the beans, herb bundle, hocks, onions, and garlic with the water. Bring to a boil, cover, and adjust the heat to a gentle simmer. Cook until the beans and hock are completely tender, about 1-1/2 hours.

Turn off the heat and remove the hocks. Cool slightly. Remove the meat from the hocks, discarding the bones, fat, and skin. Cut the meat into small cubes. Remove the herb bundle (bouquet garni) and discard. Heat the soup and adjust the seasoning as needed with salt and pepper. Pour into bowls and serve.

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