

toxoplasmosis. Always insist on a generic version of this medicine because they are cheaper. A competitively priced generic version is Purbac, but there are others as well.

## Stage 3

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In this stage, HIV-positive people may start to feel ill and may stay in bed longer than they normally would because they are not feeling well. Stage 3 usually means that the immune system has become slightly more damaged and, as a result, certain OI's can occur.

### Problems to watch for in Stage 3:

More profound weight loss. In Stage 3, HIV-positive people may continue losing a noticeable amount of weight. Someone who loses more than 10% of his or her ideal body weight is said to be suffering from profound weight loss. For example, a person who normally weighs 70 kilograms and drops to 62 kilograms or less has lost a considerable amount of weight.

Chronic diarrhoea: A number of germs, including HIV itself, can cause loose stools. Diarrhoea that lasts longer than one month can be serious and indicates that the immune system is not acting as it should.

Fever. Running a temperature for longer than a month.

Oral candidiasis (thrush): This is a common fungal infection of the mouth. It can cause a sore throat, pain when swallowing, nausea, and loss of appetite.

Oral hairy leukoplakia: This is a common viral infection of the mouth. Like thrush, it can cause discomfort in the mouth and may interfere with eating.

Tuberculosis: This is a serious infection of the lungs. It can make people with damaged immune systems very sick and must be treated.

Severe bacterial infections: Unlike minor head and chest colds seen in people with stage 2 HIV, bacterial infection in stage 3 can cause severe breathing problems and cough. Pneumonia is a common bacterial infection seen in stage 3.

Vaginal candidiasis: Many women, regardless of their HIV status, experience vaginal yeast infection. In HIV-positive women with damaged immune systems, vaginal yeast infections can be more severe and can last for more than a month.

### Medical care you should receive:

- You should return to the clinic every three months for a check-up. You should also report to the clinic, regardless of how long it has been since your last appointment, if you experience a new problem or are not having any luck managing an older problem.
- Women should continue having a Pap smear every year.
- You should continue getting a flu shot every year, preferably before flu season comes around.
- You should continue having safer sex, eating right, and take a multivitamin every day.
- You should continue taking either cotrimoxazole to prevent PCP and toxoplasmosis.

## Stage 4

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This stage is reserved for HIV-positive people who are quite ill and are usually not well enough to work, care for themselves, or spend a lot of time out of bed. Stage 4 generally means that the immune system is seriously damaged and that the person is at risk for a number of dangerous OI's.