**T-Cell and HIV**

T-cells (or T-lymphocytes) are white blood cells that play an important role in the immune system. There are two main types of T-cells. One type has molecules called CD4 on its surface; these `helper' cells orchestrate the body's response to certain micro-organisms such as viruses. The other T-cells, which have a molecule called CD8, destroy cells that are infected and produce antiviral substances. HIV is able to attach itself to the CD4 molecule, allowing the virus to enter and infect these cells, damaging them in the process. The CD4 count is a reflection of how many functional CD4 t-cells are circulating in the blood.

***Normal values:*** Varies but usually 600 - 1200 in a healthy adult.

***Less than 350****:* The immune system is somewhat weakened.

- Your doctor may consider starting HIV medications and prophylactic antibiotics.

***Less than 200:*** The person is at a much greater risk of opportunistic infections.

- HIV medications and prophylactic antibiotics will be prescribed to help prevent these infections.