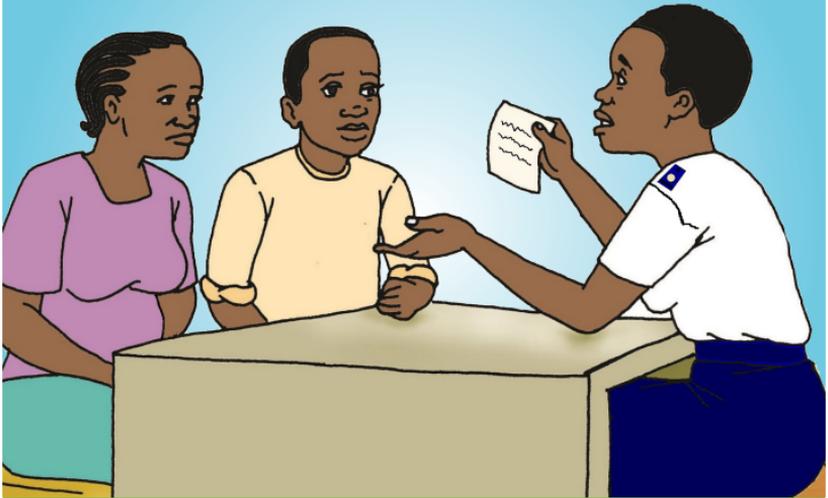


Living Positively with HIV



HIV and AIDS

What is this booklet for?

This booklet provides important facts about HIV and AIDS and tips for positive living. This booklet contains information that a person who is infected with HIV will need to know to stay healthy.

What is Positive Living and why should I care?

Positive Living means taking care of your health and body when you have HIV. A person with HIV can live a healthy, normal and productive life when they practice Positive Living.

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What is HIV?



HIV is a virus, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV makes it difficult for your body to fight illnesses and you start to get sick often. Your body is kept safe from diseases by your immune system. Your immune system is like an army. HIV is like an enemy which attacks your army.

Your army is made up of soldiers called CD4 cells. When the HIV enters your body, your CD4 cells try to fight the enemy. HIV attacks and destroys your CD4 cells.

BEING HIV-INFECTED DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE AIDS. YOU CAN STILL LIVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY LIFE FOR MANY YEARS.

AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is the illness you get once HIV has destroyed almost all of your CD4 cells and your body is too weak to fight off diseases.

What are the stages of HIV?



Newly Infected with HIV

When you are first infected with HIV, you may feel no difference at all.



Living with HIV

You can remain healthy and live a normal life for many years without illness.



Early AIDS

You begin to get sick with infections such as tuberculosis (TB).



Full AIDS

Your body becomes very weak and you get sick very easily with prolonged illness.

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HIV destroys the body's defense system very slowly.

From the time when you become infected with HIV to when you become ill with AIDS can take many years.

Remember HIV can be passed on through unprotected sex at any stage when you are HIV positive. It is important to practice safer sex and encourage your sexual partner(s) to go for HTC.

Positive living can slow down the speed at which HIV grows in your body and prevents other infections to help you stay strong and healthy longer.

There is treatment available to help protect your immune system and delay HIV from becoming AIDS.

**A PERSON WITH HIV
CAN HAVE A NORMAL,
PRODUCTIVE, AND HEALTHY
LIFE THROUGH POSITIVE
LIVING.**

Why is it important to disclose your status?



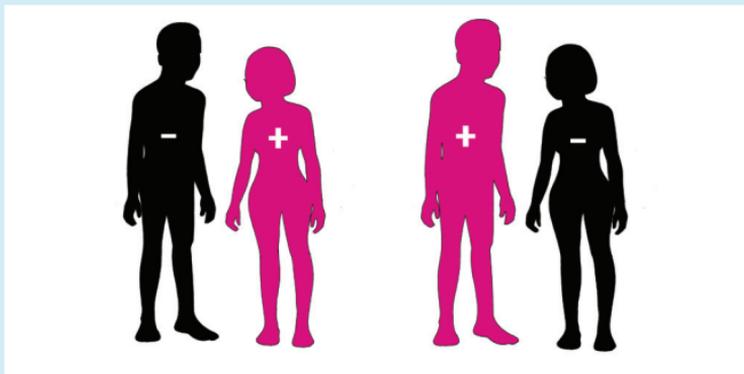
Telling someone you trust about your HIV status can help you accept your status and get the support you need to stay healthy and practice positive living.

It is important for your sexual partner(s) to go for testing and treatment to protect their health. By disclosing your status you can encourage your sexual partner(s) to seek HTC where they can get tested for HIV and seek counselling and treatment so they can stay healthy.

The best way for people with HIV to fight stigma is by being open about their status. If you are ashamed of HIV you may try to hide it and stop living positively. It is important not to blame yourself or others. Anyone can get HIV.

**DISCLOSING YOUR STATUS
TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST
IS THE FIRST STEP TO
ACCEPTING YOUR STATUS
AND GETTING SUPPORT.**

What is discordance?



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Discordance is when one person in a sexual relationship has HIV and the other does not. Your partner's negative status is by chance. It does not mean that they are immune. If you and your partner take risks, your partner may become HIV-infected in the future.

There are support groups for discordant couples that can help you and your partner learn from others who have faced the same situation as you.

You can protect your partner from HIV by using a condom every time you have sex. Encourage your sexual partner(s) to go for HTC so they know their status.

DISCORDANT COUPLES CAN LIVE TOGETHER HAPPILY FOR YEARS WITHOUT THE HIV-UNINFECTED PARTNER BECOMING INFECTED. TOGETHER, YOU MUST WORK TO PROTECT YOUR PARTNER FROM HIV.

Can I still have a healthy sex life?



Yes! People living with HIV can still have a healthy and enjoyable sex life but it is important to practice safer sex. Safer sex means that you:

- Use a condom correctly every time you have sex.
- Be faithful to your partner.
- Disclose your status to your sexual partner(s) and encourage them to get tested.

And remember, there are other safe ways to be intimate with your partner, including kissing and touching and hugging.

YOU CAN CONTINUE TO HAVE A HEALTHY SEX LIFE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO PRACTICE SAFER SEX TO KEEP YOU AND YOUR PARTNER HEALTHY.

You must take responsibility to minimize the risk of transmitting HIV to your partner and becoming re-infected.

Why is it important to find a support system?



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It is important to seek support from different sources, such as your family, friends, church, health care provider, counsellor, and peer-support groups.

Having a support system allows you to share your worries and relieve stress. You can learn ideas on how to cope with your status and manage your symptoms and treatments. The members can also share how they overcame some of the same challenges you might be facing.

Remember, you are not alone; there are people in your community, workplace or health facility who can help and support you.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEEK SUPPORT FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY AND STRONG.

Why do I need to go for referral?



When you test positive you will be referred for more tests at a health facility. It is important to go for follow up tests to help manage your illness so you can stay healthy and live longer.

It is important to understand your diagnosis. See a health worker to learn more and help you find a support group in your community.

When you go for referral, a health worker will assess the strength of your immune system with tests and will tell you if you need treatment. The health facility will also offer counseling and connect you to a support group.

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU FEEL SICK TO SEE A HEALTH WORKER. VISIT A HEALTH FACILITY FOR FOLLOW UP CARE AND TREATMENT SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY AND STRONG.

Do not wait until you feel sick to see a health worker. There is medicine and ARV treatment available to help you stay healthy and strong.

Glossary of Terms:

AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

ARVs (antiretroviral): a combination of drugs that slow HIV from reproducing by protecting CD4 cells in the immune system.

CD4s: white blood cells in the immune system, 'the soldiers in the body'.

Disclosure: telling someone else about your HIV status.

Discordance: when one person in a sexual relationship has HIV and the other does not (This does not mean that the HIV-negative partner is immune from HIV!).

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus, the virus which causes AIDS.

HTC: HIV Testing and Counselling.

Immune system: the parts throughout the body that protect against diseases.

Positive living: taking care of your health and body when you have HIV.

Stigma: feeling ashamed because of your status.

Support group: a group of people who meet regularly to discuss how they are living positively with HIV.

Where can I get more information?

All public health facilities and private health facilities.

Tips for Positive Living



Drink safe, clean water



Go for routine checkups and get medical treatment



Eat healthy, balanced diet



Stay active



Wash hands regularly



Get enough rest



Adhere to medication given to you by a health worker



Avoid drugs and alcohol



Keep your counselling appointments



Practice safer sex

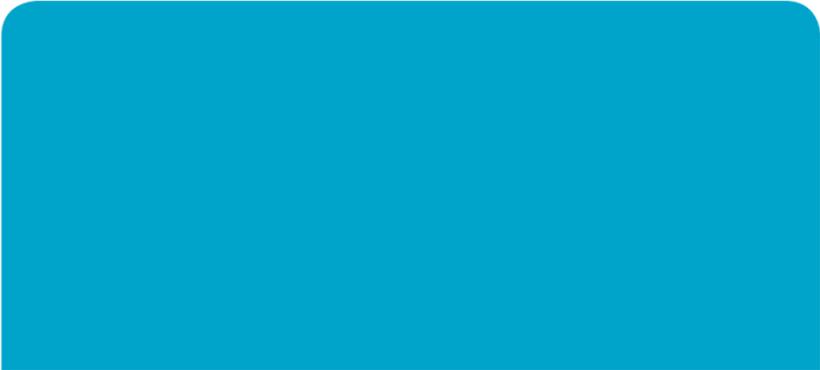


Go for PMTCT services



Join a support group

REMEMBER: A PERSON WHO IS HIV-INFECTED CAN HAVE A NORMAL, PRODUCTIVE AND HEALTHY LIFE WHEN THEY PRACTICE POSITIVE LIVING.



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