

BOOKLET TWO

HIV and AIDS and My Treatment



HIV and AIDS and My Treatment

Why is this booklet important?

HIV and AIDS and ART are words we hear and read about but sometimes we do not have enough information about what they really mean. This booklet will explain what these things mean, and will also explain what is meant by treatment for HIV. This booklet will help you to think about the difference between HIV and AIDS. It will also help you to work out why the treatment that is available for HIV is so important.

Facts we must know:
HIV stays in your body forever. There are many ways to keep healthy when you are HIV positive. When you get sick there is treatment called Antiretroviral Therapy which is "ART" in short.

1 JANE, WHAT EXACTLY IS HIV? I HEAR OF IT BUT DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT?

2 WELL MARY, FROM WHAT I KNOW HIV IS A VIRUS THAT WEAKENS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM.

3

HIV STANDS FOR:
HUMAN – FOUND IN PEOPLE
IMMUNODEFICIENCY – MEANING THE BODY CAN'T FIGHT INFECTIONS
VIRUS – A GERM ABLE TO CAUSE DISEASES
AIDS STANDS FOR:
ACQUIRED – NOT INHERITED IN OUR GENES
IMMUNE – BODY'S FIGHTING MECHANISM
DEFICIENCY – WEAKNESS
SYNDROME – A COLLECTION OF SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE

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Activities:

Let's have fun and share!

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Activity 1:

*HIV, the immune system
and opportunistic
infections*

People with HIV may look and stay healthy for many years but HIV destroys the cells in the body – cells whose job is to fight off infection. These are called **CD4 cells**. As more and more cells are killed, people get what are called opportunistic infections.

Opportunistic infections are caused by germs that are around us all the time. If our immune system is working well, these germs usually do not make us sick, and when we do get sick the immune system that is working well helps us get better much faster.

When HIV has multiplied so much that the immune system can no longer fight off common infections, the person gets sick more often with many illnesses. This is called AIDS. **Once a person is infected with HIV, the virus remains in the body for life.**

What are three important things you have learnt from this page?

1

2

3

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BUT HOW DOES
A PERSON GET HIV?

THE VIRUS CAN ONLY
BE PASSED THROUGH THE BODY
FLUIDS OF AN INFECTED PERSON.
THERE ARE A FEW WAYS THAT
THIS HAPPENS.



Activity 2: How does one get HIV?

Help Jane answer Mary by
filling in the table below, tick either
under "yes" or "no".

People can get HIV by...	Yes	No
Sitting next to each other		
Having unprotected sex		
Shaking hands		
Hugging		
Sharing injection needles		
Playing		
Coughing and sneezing		
Using the same cups, cutlery or food		
Sharing razor blades		
Sharing the same toilet		
Blood transfusions		
Touching animals and pets		
Bites from mosquitoes and other insects		
Sharing baths, showers or buckets		
Being in swimming pools		
Pregnancy and delivery		
Kissing		

Do you know as much
as Jane? If you got most
of the answers right,
well done! If you were
unsure about any of
them, ask someone who
knows about HIV to tell
you more, and look at
the answers (at bottom
of this page).

ANSWERS: Having unprotected sex, Sharing injection needles, Blood transfusions and Pregnancy and delivery.

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Activity 3:

How does one get HIV?
What is AIDS?
How does ART work?

BY SHARING NEEDLES
AND OTHER INJECTION
EQUIPMENT WITHOUT THE
NEEDLES BEING STERILIZED.

**HIV IS TRANSMITTED THROUGH
BLOOD THAT HAS
HIV IN IT.**

THROUGH BLOOD
TRANSFUSIONS. NOWADAYS,
BLOOD IS SCREENED (CHECKED) FOR
HIV BEFORE IT IS USED.

**HIV IS TRANSMITTED THROUGH
BLOOD THAT HAS HIV IN IT.**

THROUGH
UNPROTECTED SEXUAL
INTERCOURSE WITH A
PERSON WHO IS INFECTED WITH
HIV. THIS IS THE MOST COMMON
CAUSE OF HIV INFECTION.

**HIV IS TRANSMITTED
THROUGH SEMEN AND
VAGINAL FLUIDS.**

BY SHARING
UNSTERILISED
RAZOR BLADES FOR
PIERCING EARS,
SHAVING OR RITUAL
MARKINGS.

**HIV IS TRANSMITTED
THROUGH BLOOD THAT
HAS HIV IN IT.**

THROUGH BREAST
MILK, DURING BREASTFEEDING
AFTER THE BABY IS BORN.

**HIV IS TRANSMITTED THROUGH
BLOOD AND BREAST MILK.**

DURING PREGNANCY
AND DELIVERY, WHEN THE
VIRUS CAN PASS FROM AN
INFECTED MOTHER
TO HER BABY.

THIS IS USUALLY THE WAY
YOUNG CHILDREN GET HIV. IT IS CALLED
PARENT TO CHILD TRANSMISSION. IT HAPPENS WHEN A
NEW BORN BABY GETS HIV FROM PARENTS WHO HAVE BEEN
INFECTED WITH HIV. NOT ALL BABIES BORN TO HIV POSITIVE
MOTHERS ARE INFECTED BY HIV – ONLY ABOUT
ONE IN THREE. THIS CAN HAPPEN DURING PREGNANCY,
DURING DELIVERY OR THROUGH
BREASTFEEDING.



1

HOW DO PEOPLE KNOW IF THEY HAVE HIV?

WHAT ARE ANTIBODIES?



3



THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW FOR SURE IS TO HAVE AN HIV TEST. ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THE HIV TEST MEANS AND HAVE GIVEN YOUR CONSENT, SOME BLOOD IS TAKEN AND TESTED TO SEE IF IT HAS ANTIBODIES TO HIV. EVEN YOUNG CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO TALK ABOUT WHETHER THEY WANT A TEST. AND HAVING HIV DOES NOT MEAN THE PERSON HAS AIDS.

2

ANTIBODIES ARE MADE BY OUR BODIES TO FIGHT THE VIRUS AND OTHER ILLNESSES. THE CELLS IN THE BODY WHOSE JOB IT IS TO FIGHT OFF INFECTION ARE KNOWN AS CD4 CELLS. HIV KILLS THESE CELLS, SO THE BODY CAN'T FIGHT INFECTION SO WELL. TO COUNT THE NUMBER OF CD4 CELLS, SOME BLOOD IS TAKEN FROM THE PERSON'S ARM AND IS CHECKED IN A LABORATORY.



4



5

BUT THIS SOUNDS DIFFICULT, WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



6

IT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THESE TESTS WILL HELP THE DOCTOR KNOW HOW TO KEEP THE HIV POSITIVE PERSON HEALTHY, AND WHAT TREATMENT THEY WOULD NEED. BY COUNTING THE NUMBER OF CD4 CELLS IN SOMEONE'S BODY, DOCTORS AND NURSES CAN FIND OUT HOW WELL THE PERSON'S IMMUNE SYSTEM IS WORKING.



7

IF THERE IS A COLLECTION OF ILLNESSES BECAUSE OF THE LOW IMMUNE SYSTEM, THE DOCTOR MAY DIAGNOSE AIDS. THIS INFORMATION ALSO HELPS DOCTORS DECIDE WHETHER TREATMENT IS NEEDED, WHICH IS CALLED ANTIRETROVIRAL TREATMENT, ART IN SHORT.



8

OK THAT MAKES SENSE, SO YOU SAID BEING HIV POSITIVE DOES NOT MEAN ONE HAS AIDS, SO WHEN DOES ONE HAVE AIDS?



9

WHAT IS ART AND HOW DOES IT WORK?



10

ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY MEDICINES ARE GIVEN TO PEOPLE WHO ARE VERY SICK WITH HIV TO HELP FIGHT THE VIRUS AND GIVE THEM A LONGER LIFE. THE MEDICINES PREVENT HIV FROM INCREASING IN THE BODY, AND THEN THE IMMUNE SYSTEM REMAINS STRONG – SO THE PERSON CAN FIGHT ILLNESS AND STAY HEALTHY. A DOCTOR MIGHT GIVE YOU MANY DIFFERENT PILLS TO TAKE TOGETHER.



11

SO CAN ANY CHILD CAN BE ON ART?

YES, IT IS THE RIGHT OF EVERY HIV POSITIVE CHILD – OR PERSON – TO ACCESS ART – WHEN THEIR BODY BEGINS TO NEED IT, AND THE DOCTOR IS THE BEST PERSON TO DECIDE WHEN THE CHILD SHOULD BEGIN TAKING ART



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Activity 4:

How can one Prevent
HIV infection?

YES, BUT SOME
MAY CHOOSE NOT TO
ABSTAIN TILL THEY ARE
MARRIED. SO BOTH THE GIRL
AND BOY SHOULD GO FOR AN
HIV TEST TO MAKE SURE THEY
KNOW THEIR HIV STATUS
FIRST – BEFORE THEY
ENGAGE IN SEX.

ABSTAIN FROM SEX
UNTIL MARRIAGE

TEACHER: SEX IS A PART OF LIFE SO LET'S TALK
ABOUT IT! BEING A YOUTH IN THIS TIME OF HIV
AND AIDS MEANS YOU HAVE TO FIND WAYS TO
EXPRESS YOURSELF WITHOUT PUTTING YOUR LIFE
AT RISK. HAVING UNPROTECTED SEX WITH A PARTNER
WHOSE STATUS YOU DO NOT KNOW AND WHO MAY
BE HIV POSITIVE IS DANGEROUS. SO WHAT
SHOULD WE DO?

WELL MAYBE THAT DOESN'T
WORK FOR EVERYONE. I THINK
THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING
IS TO PROTECT ONESELF BY USING
CONDOMS THAT PREVENT HIV
FROM ENTERING THE BODY.

YES, AND
THEN THEY HAVE TO
STAY FAITHFUL TO EACH
OTHER, AND ALSO USE
SAFE SEX PRACTICES.

BUT STILL
THERE IS A CHANCE
THAT SOMETHING
WILL GO WRONG WITH
THE CONDOM SO WE
NEED TO THINK ABOUT
THAT TOO.

DON'T FORGET THAT SEX IS
NOT THE ONLY WAY TO GET HIV. WE
SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE PRECAUTIONS WHEN
CLEANING SOMEONE WHO IS BLEEDING AS THE VIRUS
CAN BE IN THEIR BLOOD. WE CAN USE GLOVES OR
PLASTIC BAGS TO PROTECT OURSELVES. AND ALSO
WHEN A BLOOD TRANSFUSION IS BEING DONE ON US,
WE SHOULD BE SURE THE BLOOD HAS BEEN
SCREENED FOR HIV. WE CAN ASK THE
DOCTOR OR NURSE TO
CONFIRM THIS.

YES, AND I ALSO HEARD
THAT YOU MUST BE CAREFUL IF YOU GO
FOR EAR PIERCING OR OTHER MARKS
ON THE BODY. THE NEEDLES AND RAZOR
BLADES MUST BE NEW OR PROPERLY
STERILIZED BY BOILING.

TEACHER: YOU GUYS KNOW A LOT. I AM IMPRESSED!
NOW YOU MUST MAKE SURE YOU PRACTISE WHAT YOU
PREACH! AND KEEP READING ON THESE ISSUES AND
SHARING WITH EACH OTHER... INFORMATION IS POWER.

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Advocacy sticker 1:

Message:
Knowledge
gives Life.
Know your facts
about HIV



You can stick it
somewhere, such as on
a school bag,
a door, a wall,
a parent's car



Look for this sticker
in your pack!

Let's remember...

- Although HIV will stay in the body forever, the body can fight it, and Antiretroviral therapy will help with this.
 - ART is a right of every HIV positive child who needs it.
 - ART slows down the ability of HIV to multiply, which leads to a stronger immune system and better health.
 - ART is not a cure for HIV, and must be taken just as the doctor says.
 - Abstain from sex until you are mature enough to discuss with your partner how to stay HIV negative.
 - Always take care when you are in contact with blood. Use rubber gloves or plastic bags over your hands, especially if you have any cuts or sores.
 - Wash your hands afterwards with soap and water.
 - When someone is HIV positive, they need to practice positive prevention - which is preventing re-infection by HIV during sex, by using a condom each time and practicing other safe sex methods.
 - For teenagers who are maturing, there is lots of information about:
 - relationships,
 - making decisions about sex,
 - having safe sex and
 - protecting yourself and others.
- You will find some information in the following booklets in this series, but much more is also available out there. Ask around!

HIV and AIDS and My Treatment

*You can make a
difference!*

- Teach others about HIV and AIDS.
- Teach others about ART and how important it is.
- Test your friends on their knowledge.
- Encourage each other to get an HIV test.
- Think seriously about what you want from life. Take time to decide how you will share your sexuality with another person, and when and the safest way.

Try this later...

- List all the things you can do to live positively – whether you are HIV positive or not.
- Write down one question you still have about HIV and AIDS and seek the answer.



Clue: You may find the answer in one of the other booklets in this series.

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HIV and Aids Information
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DFID Department for
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UNAIDS
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