

IMAI wall chart on the adolescent living with HIV

According to the World Health Organization (WHO)

- **“adolescents”** are individuals in the 10–19 years age group
- **“youth”** are individuals in the 15–24 years age group
- **“young people”** combine both adolescence and youth and include the 10–24 years age group.

Adolescence has physical, psychological, emotional and socio-cultural dimensions. It is a phase rather than a fixed age band, and is perceived differently in different societies.

THE 5 “A”S AND THE ADOLESCENT LIVING WITH HIV

NOTE: With a minor, understand your legal obligations in terms of consent and confidentiality, bearing in mind the best interests of the adolescent and their evolving capacities.

When providing treatment, care, support and prevention for adolescents, use appropriate language and attitudes.

ASSESS

- Physical and psychological status and support structures
- Current treatments and adherence
- Sexual activity (current and intended), pregnancy, health-related risk behaviours.

ADVISE

- Relationships, couple counselling, sexual activity, condom use, contraception
- Treatment plan: dose (use Tanner scale), simplest regimen, evaluate confidence and readiness
- Prevention plan: dual protection, consider mode of transmission and sexual activity.

AGREE

- Disclosure: Who? How? When? What support?
- Role of adolescents and others in treatment and prevention plans
- Goals: clear, measurable, realistic, under patient’s control, limited in number.

ASSIST

- Summary of plan, referrals, links
- Provide medication and contraceptives/condoms
- Skills and tools for self-management, adherence, safer sex.

ARRANGE

- Record visit and arrange next appointment date, including parents and partner (as appropriate)
- Activities/support between visits
- Referral as necessary, links with peers

SPECIAL CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING PREVENTION, CARE, TREATMENT AND SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENTS LIVING WITH HIV

CHALLENGES	Adolescents who acquired HIV perinatally (often younger age: early adolescence)	Adolescents who acquired HIV during adolescence (usually older age: 15 plus years)
BENEFICIAL DISCLOSURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If not yet discussed, disclosure to adolescent ■ Peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Need support to tell chosen family and friends ■ Will benefit from others knowing so they can get support ■ Fear of stigma/blame
POSITIVE PREVENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Not yet sexually active ■ Preparing for sexual activity ■ Wanting sexual relations and pregnancy in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Already sexually active ■ Changes in health risk behaviour(s) ■ Wanting marriage and children ■ Need life skills, peer support
CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Living with family/guardian ■ No longer a compliant child ■ Needs to start taking responsibility for own treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Legal position on age of consent ■ Concern about confidentiality ■ Desire for independence and need for support
DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Delays in skeletal growth & puberty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Normal development
TRANSITION OF CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Paediatric to adolescent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adolescent to adult
ART AND ADHERENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Choice of regimens ■ Adherence: no longer a child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When to begin ART ■ Choice of regimen ■ Adherence
LIVING WITH A CHRONIC CONDITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May be an orphan ■ Acceptance of the condition may change as the adolescent develops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New diagnosis ■ Depression and anger ■ Lack of experience and resources

Discussion points on sex for adolescents living with HIV

1. Do not feel rushed into having sex.
2. If you have not yet had sex, consider delaying. Do not begin a sexual relationship until you are ready. Talk together and agree on the limits of your physical intimacy.
3. If you are with a new partner, find other safer ways of giving each other pleasure until you are ready to have sex in this relationship. Enjoy other activities together.
4. When you have sex, **use a condom correctly every time**, even if your partner is also HIV positive. Condoms also prevent unplanned pregnancy.
5. Drinking alcohol and using substances increase the risk of unplanned and unprotected sex.
6. Avoid situations or people that may put you at risk of unwanted sex.
7. Reduce the number of people with whom you have sex.
8. Consider telling trusted people that you are living with HIV, so they can support you.