

HIV Treatment

Did you know that by taking ARVs you can get healthier, and you can also reduce the chance of spreading HIV to others? This is how it works.



The medications used to control HIV are called antiretrovirals or ARVs.



Antiretroviral therapy works to reduce the amount of HIV in the body by preventing the virus from infecting new cells and multiplying.



This allows the immune system to partially recover and prevent further damage to the body. If the virus cannot reproduce itself, your immune system will be stronger and you can be healthier. This will also help your body fight off and prevent illnesses, such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, and diarrhoea.

Reduced amount of HIV in the body = Reduced chances of infecting your partner.

ARVs are not a cure for AIDS

By reducing the amount of HIV in the body, you also lower the chances of transmitting HIV to your sexual partners.

ARVs are good for you

ARVs are good for you and your family.
ARVs are good for your health.



For more information and questions concerning the contents of this brochure

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These materials have been cleared by the National Clearing House Committee.

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Combination Prevention Strategies

Botswana HIV-MARPs Project



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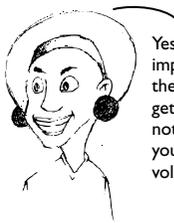


BATSWANA AND AMERICANS
IN PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT HIV/AIDS

HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC)¹



Hey Chomza did you know there are many ways you can prevent getting and spreading HIV? The first is to know your status through testing.



Yes it is very important but the decision to get tested should not be forced on you, it should be voluntary.



That's my girl, you are correct. It is critical to know what it means to test positive or negative for HIV.



Yes, Yes tell me more...

If you test positive for HIV

- It means you are infected with HIV.
- Testing positive for HIV does not mean that you have AIDS.
- Many people who test positive stay healthy for several years, even if they don't start taking medication right away.
- Even if you are HIV positive, you can still be infected with HIV again.
- Always use a condom when you have sex to protect yourself from getting infected again.



If you test negative for HIV

- If you had sex without a condom recently, the virus may not show up in the first test.
- You should continue to get HIV tests regularly.
- You can still get HIV in the future. It's important to use condoms correctly and consistently.



Avoid waiting until you become sick before you get tested for HIV. Get tested for HIV regularly.

Safe Male Circumcision²



Hei bru, I just saw a health centre ad about safe male circumcision (SMC).



Aha, I know that one, SMC, but I don't know why it is important.



...There are a few reasons my friend why SMC is effective. You see, the foreskin is tender and can tear easily, and tears give HIV a doorway into the bloodstream. The head of the penis under the foreskin is much tougher. The foreskin also provides great hiding places for dirt, bacteria, viruses, and other foreign objects. So removing it not only reduces your risk of some STI's like HIV, Chlamydia, Syphilis and Gonorrhoea, it also makes it easier to keep yourself clean.



Lets talk figures my friend. By how much can SMC reduce the chances of HIV infection?



By up to 60% ! wait...! Where are you going now?



60% ... I am going for SMC.



wait, wait! please wait very very important point, safe male circumcision must be performed by a trained medical professional in government hospitals and clinics Also, it only reduces your risk, it is not a prevention method!!! SMC is not a substitute for condom use!

Facts about SMC

- You will be tested for HIV before SMC is performed.
- SMC does not protect from getting infected with HIV, but can only minimize the risk.
- After SMC, it is important to use a condom correctly and consistently.
- If you are HIV positive and decide to have SMC performed, you can still infect your partner or re-infect yourself with HIV if you have unprotected sex.

Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)



Tshidi, what happened you look horrible.



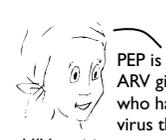
I feel horrible and scared, a client just raped me without a condom...what if I am infected with HIV?



Thats horrible...wait a minute..do you know about PEP?



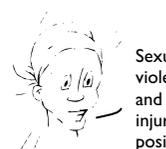
Never heard of it, what is it?



PEP is an emergency treatment of ARV given to HIV-negative people who have been exposed to the virus through body fluids of an HIV-positive person and are at a high risk of becoming infected.



That's interesting, what type of high risk exposure are you talking about?



Sexual exposure, cases of violence or sexual assault and rape, and needle-stick injury while helping an HIV-positive person.



I see when should this treatment be given to someone like me?



Good question, if the medication is given within 72 hours of exposure to the virus, it will reduce the chances of getting infected by HIV. In your case, as a survivor of sexual assault you must immediately report the matter to the police for PEP to be administered.



You are a friend indeed let me report this matter to the police immediately.

Facts about PEP

- PEP is not a cure for HIV: it is only given to people who are HIV negative.
- Healthcare staff should monitor anyone taking PEP for possible side effects such as diarrhoea, headaches, nausea/vomiting, and fatigue.
- PEP medications must be taken for a month.
- After completing PEP, you should have a follow-up HIV screening and counselling.
- Continue to use safer sex practices such as correct and consistent condom use.

¹ The HTC content is adapted from information provided on AIDS Basics from the South African Red Ribbon website (<http://www.redribbon.co.za/aids-basics.php>).

² The SMC information has been adapted from the Clearinghouse on Male Circumcision for HIV Prevention website (<http://www.malecircumcision.org/>).