

Live Today

Your Health Is In Your Hands

Pg2 what is a sexual network?

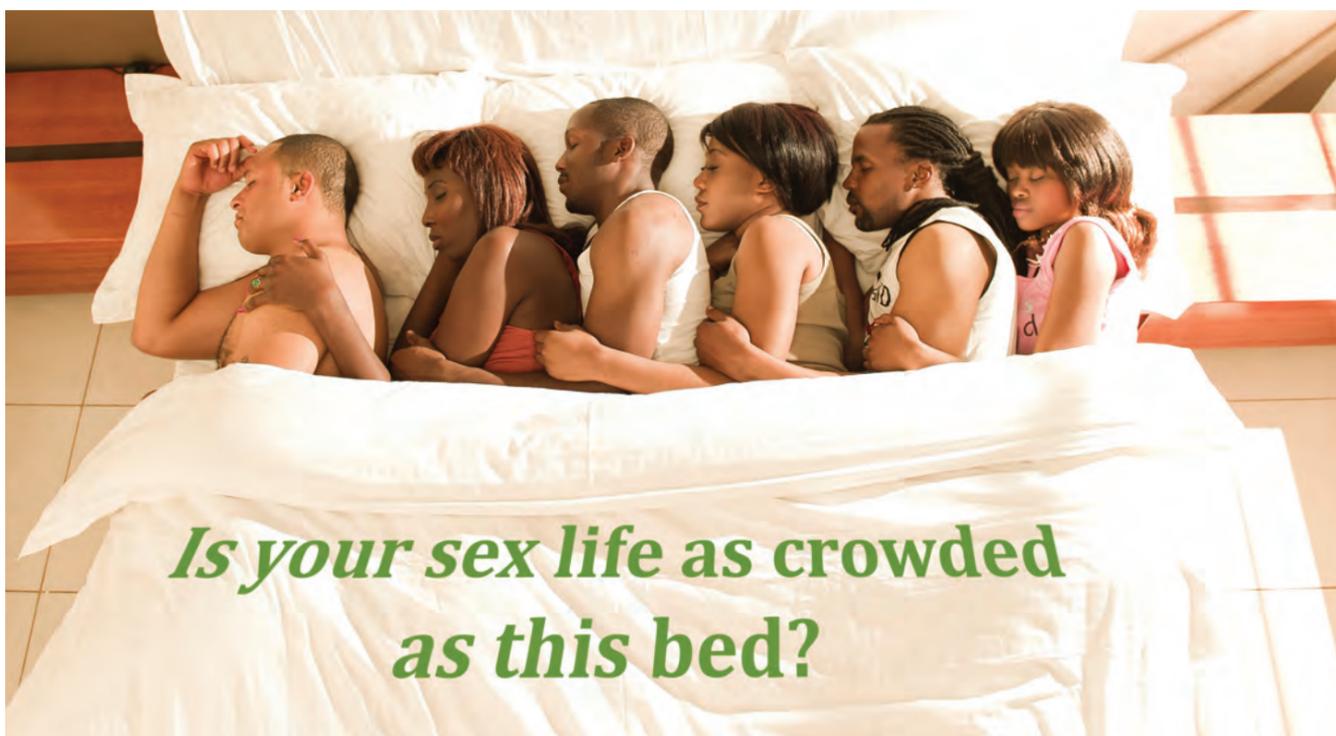
Pg3 The Reality: Can You Cut Your Connection to HIV?

Pg4 Break the Silence

Find us in The Post the last Friday of every month!

Crowded beds:

Do you know all your sexual partners?



Is your sex life as crowded as this bed?

infidelity does not break a home/marriage), and word play that trivialises infidelities through jokes such as ATM (Assistant To Madam) or MBA (Married But Available), are still very much used in parts of our society but downplay the dangers people are putting them-

“We all know at least one person who has more than one sexual partner at a time. Often times, when we suspect or know someone has multiple sexual partners we do nothing about it”

selves in. It is important to try and find what role cultural and social beliefs play in the often quiet acceptance or endurance of multiple sexual partners in stable relationships.

Chewe, however, no longer believes in silence or passivity in the face of unfaithfulness and possible HIV infection. “As a married person, you have a right to raise the issue of your spouse’s infidelity and try to set some rules and measures for your protection. People need to talk about sexual relations.”

We all know at least one person who has more than one sexual partner at a time. Often times, when we suspect or know someone has multiple sexual partners we do nothing about it, thinking nothing we can do or say will change their behaviour. However, people with more than one sexual partner remain one of the main reasons HIV is continuing to spread in Zambia.

Vera Chewe, a 37 year old wid-

ow of Lusaka, attributes her HIV positive status to her husband’s multiple sexual partnerships. The mother of three, who supports her family through basket weaving at Chikumbuso Centre in N’gombe compound, says she always suspected that her husband had other sexual partners.

“Before my husband passed on, I was unhappy about his movements and always worried about his health. I often talked to him about his lifestyle and how sleep-

ing around brings diseases but you know issues of sexual behaviour are ultimately an individual choice. You can tell a person about multiple sexual relationships and they even fully realise the risk they are exposing themselves and their partners to but you know how it is when the devil is controlling a person, even with that knowledge they still carry on,” she says.

Traditional expressions such as “Ubuchende bwa mwaume tabonaula n’ganda” (a man’s

How many sexual partners do you have?



Have you thought about HIV?

safe love think talk act



What is a Sexual Network?



Are you a **safe lover**?

Question	Yes	No
1. Are you having sex with more than one person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you use a condom every time you have sex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you know your HIV status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you know the HIV status of each person you have sex with?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Think about HIV

Tell Us!
 Do you have a burning question about your relationships and HIV?
 Email questions to:
livetoday@cshzambia.com



A sexual network is an extended group of people – known or unknown to each other – connected by the sexual relationships they are in. In such a network, HIV and other STIs are shared among members.



Answers for checklist: 1. No 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes

The Reality Cut Your Connection To HIV?



Cutting off your sexual networks and starting afresh by testing for HIV is the only way to make sure you and your partner are not at risk of HIV infection.

As we know, there are many different reasons why people have multiple sexual partners, and many different ways in which they manage their sexual partners and their HIV status.

We talked to people in Lusaka to find some real life examples of people who have more than one sexual partner.

Do you recognize yourself in any of these situations? If so, it might be time to think about your sexual partners and ask yourself if you know all of their sexual partners.

I am a married mother of four. My husband started having extra marital affairs shortly after we married and I contracted HIV from him just three years into our marriage. I am living positively together with our youngest child and my husband is still having other sexual relationships. I could not advocate safe sex even after I learnt of his infidelity because tradition does not encourage the use of condoms in marriage.

I have not left my husband for a number of reasons; 1. tradition frowns upon a woman who leaves her marital home 2. I depend on him financially, 3. I try to avoid the stigma by friends and society that comes with being a divorced woman and 4. I have no support from my family. Although it is a painful thing, I now ignore my husband's extra marital affairs and just live my own life. I now believe that every woman should be empowered enough to live life for herself.

Anonymous: 50's



I have two friends who are in multiple relationships. Most of my friends say it is indecision, as in they can't decide who they really want to be with. But one particular friend of mine is only dating two guys because her mother doesn't like the guy she's really into, so she has a "mother preferred" guy just for show. I've been in multiple relationships before due to indecision. It's sort of a trend these days, sometimes it's just peer pressure, some girls just do it for money and others do it for popularity. I wouldn't be too sure why boys do it, but all in all a lot of people are doing it now.

Nosizwe Mwape 19 – Student



Initially I had one wife, then I made another woman pregnant and her family told me to marry her. Such mistakes happen in life and my first wife understood and forgave me so I now have two wives. I think as a man it is okay to have more than one partner if you can support them but it is unacceptable for women. As men we are rational even when picking extra partners but women just do it on impulse and that's dangerous. I don't use condoms with my wives because we all trust each other.

As a man you can assess who to use a condom with and who not to. If you have just met someone you have to use condoms until you know them well enough.

Nickson Mweene 37 – Carver



Monogamous Partnerships



One life, One partner

This is when a person has one sexual partner over a long period of time.

Sexual Abstinence



Till the right time

This is when a person decides not to have any sexual partners until they find that one special person.

Out of these different types of relationships, it was found that the most common sexual practice by Zambians was "playing the field", with the practice being highest among men. What this means is that many sexually active men and women are at high risk of getting infected with HIV as a result of having many sexual partners. The main reasons people gave for having more than one sexual partner include money, working away from home, unfaithful partners, poverty, and a lack of information.

The scary thing about having multiple sexual partners, is that you can be connected to a large sexual network without even knowing about it. The question to ask yourself is, "if I have more than one sexual partner, could it be that my partners also have more than one sexual partner?" Realizing you are part of a sexual network is the first step to understanding how at risk you are of HIV infection.

Remember, the bigger your sexual network, the higher the risk of getting HIV. Next you should be thinking about how you can reduce your risk. The best way forward is: 1. Use a condom every time you have sex. 2. Go for an HIV test. 3. Reduce your number of sexual partners. 4. Know your partner's HIV status.

THE FACTS

Now that we have heard some real life stories, let's take a look at what research has found. Recent studies in Zambia have identified four different types of relationships which occur the most: overlapping concurrency, sequential partnership, monogamous partnerships and sexual abstinence. Can you identify which one best describes your behaviour?

Overlapping Concurrency



Playing the field

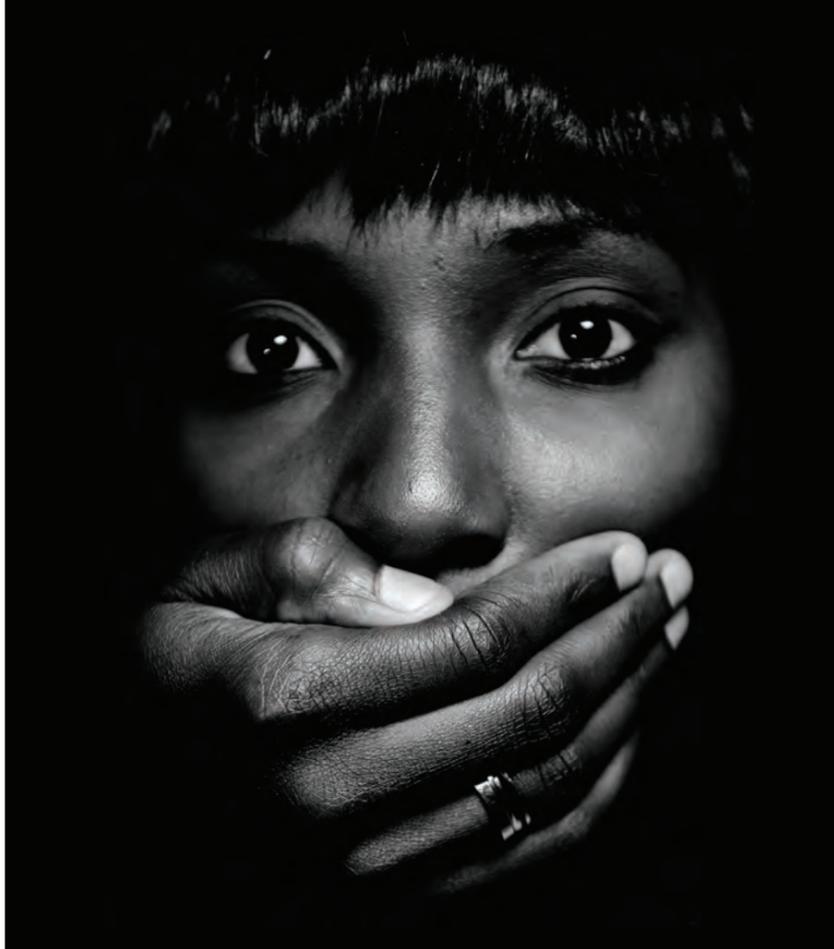
Playing the field is when a person is having sex with more than one partner at a time.

Sequential Partnership



One after the other

This is when a person has a series of sexual relationships one after the other.



Break the Silence Would you tell?

No one wants to be a 'kachepa'! Everyone wants to belong to a circle of trust; to be someone's confidant and to maintain a relationship. But refusing to talk about sexual unfaithfulness is one of the reasons why people continue to have many sexual partners. By remaining silent about the dangers surrounding these sexual behaviours we will never bring about change. Would you tell your friend if you found out their partner was cheating on them?

We find out why people do or do not tell on cheaters.

“ I would not tell because it is unnecessary trouble. My experience so far has been that the person you warn will tell their partner and both of them will gang up on you and accuse you of being nosy and jealous of their relationship. Most times we, as onlookers, care enough to warn a fellow woman but we stop ourselves for fear of being ridiculed by those who would rather stay in denial and save their relationships. I don't think silence around having multiple partners is always due to lack of concern by the public; sometimes it is due to fear of such reactions, which unfortunately are the commonest.”



Tessa Meleki 20s – Hair dresser

“ I can't tell because that is ruining another person's marriage or relationship. It is not my place as an outsider to bring up such issues, it is better they find out on their own. I also know from experience that you can tell someone as many times as you want but they will not act on it unless they decide to. I caught HIV from my late wife who apparently also caught it from someone else while I was in jail. When I came out, a number of people tried to warn me about her behaviour and advised that I leave her but I did not listen to any of them. We can't really say that there is silence around multiple partners, people do talk it is just that those who are supposed to listen and act choose not to.”

Justin Kabambi 55 – Trader

“ I can tell but it depends on how close the person concerned is to me. Sometimes you can put yourself in problems if the person you have alerted rushes to their husband and even mentions your name. When you are alerted as a woman, it is important to stay calm and take that as a hint so that you catch him on your own. God always provides you an opportunity to catch a cheating partner but you have to be level headed while investigating. Seeing how dangerous the world has now become, it is advisable that women who suspect their husbands of infidelity insist on using condoms even as they investigate. Times have changed a lot and people no longer live as we did back then so in today's world condoms are not misplaced even within a marriage set-up.”

Lillian Naulanda 50 - Market trader

“ I would tell because that person would be exposing my friend to unnecessary risk and I do not believe there is any benefit in shielding sexually irresponsible people. There are so many diseases these days such as HIV and I would be a bad friend if I did nothing to at least warn my friend. I have told a friend before and I would do it again. Sexual partners are seen as a status symbol by some people. They cheat on their partners and even glorify the practice by praising themselves that they get all the girls because they've got swag etc. I find that kind of mind-set disturbing because having multiple sexual partners is not cool but risky behaviour.”



Rabson Phiri - Student

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Voluntary Counselling & Testing	Abstinence
Prevention of Mother to To Child Transmission	Partner reduction
Anti-Retroviral Treatment	Condom use
STI prevention & treatment	Paralegal matters
Male circumcision	Human trafficking
Stress Management	Gender-based violence
Alcohol & drug abuse	Relationship problems

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Tell Us!
Do you think we can stop having many sexual partners? Why or why not?
Tell us on livetoday@cshzambia.com



Live Today

Your Health Is In Your Hands

Pg2 How To Use
Condoms

Pg3 Break the
Silence

Pg4 Your
Space

**FREE
COPY**

Safe Sex = Good Sex



Using a condom is a practical step to protect ourselves and the people we love. It is an expression of love and responsibility.

Condoms are seen differently by different people. Some see using condoms as breaking trust between partners, while others see it as a statement to protect their health and that of their partner.

Science has revealed that irregular condom use is one of the reasons HIV continues to spread in Zambia.

A woman in Lusaka thinks people in stable sexual relationships are less likely to use condoms than those who are not.

"When you are having casual sex, you make sure that you use a condom because you understand the risk involved. But when you are having sex with someone you trust, like your spouse or long time boy or girlfriend, you tend to relax. You decide that you have been together long enough and you love and trust each other so it is now okay to stop using condoms. I think that's where the problem starts for many people," she says.

She believes that some people have unprotected sex because they respect their pride more than their health.

"You see a man who has many sexual partners yet he cannot tolerate any condom talk from his wife because it hurts his pride. He feels he is entitled to unprotected sex with both his wife and his girlfriends, and he pays no attention to the risk he is creating for everyone. There are many women who do that too. They think by using condoms they are admitting to being promiscuous people who can't be trusted."

Some people see having sex

without a condom as an expression of trust. Unfortunately, this unprotected sex can result in HIV transmission. Often times, people who maintain long term sexual partnerships outside of their marriage end up trusting those partners so much that they stop using condoms with them. What they do not realize is that most of those extra sexual partners also have trusting sexual relationships with other men and women.

All these people having sex with each other form a sexual network. Once one member of a sexual network gets HIV, everyone else having unprotected sex is at risk of contracting HIV.

**"Let's make
2012 a year of
safe loving."**

If you know you are in a sexual network, condoms provide highly effective and reliable protection against HIV infection.

A 24 year old student at the University of Zambia (UNZA) says that although he has multiple sexual partners, he always uses condoms to protect himself and his partners from HIV.

In this New Year, show your love by being a safe lover: stay faithful to one faithful partner or use a condom every time you have sex.

Let's make 2012 a year of safe loving!

Remember, condoms are just one of the many ways to prevent HIV. Other HIV prevention methods include faithfulness, abstinence, medical male circumcision, prevention of mother to child transmission, sexual partner reduction, and early diagnosis and treatment of HIV.



**She's not afraid
to talk about
condoms
are YOU?**

**Have you thought
about HIV?**

safe love think talk act



HOW TO HANDLE A CONDOM



How do condoms protect you from HIV? Condoms protect you by preventing the exchange of body fluids (blood, semen, vaginal fluids) between you and your sexual partner. These body fluids carry the HIV virus which can then be passed from one person to another during unprotected sex. In Zambia today, one out of every five people aged 15 to 49 has HIV. This puts every sexually active Zambian at very high risk of getting HIV every time they have unprotected sex.

Deciding to use a condom is not always easy. We asked people why they do not use condoms. Here is what they said.

- "Condoms are uncomfortable"
- "Condoms take away pleasure"
- "I am anxious, nervous or shy about using condoms"
- "I do not discuss or talk about sex or condoms with my sexual partners"

If you talk about sex and condom use with your partner and plan together on how to use condoms, you will no longer have any reasons to avoid using condoms. At the end of the day, condoms are very reliable and are the only way to protect yourself from HIV infection when having sex. Use condoms and they will reward you with an HIV free life.

How to use a male condom

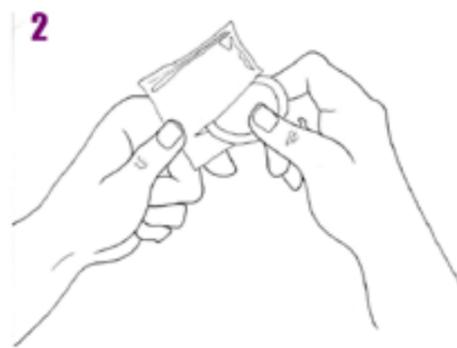
CONDOM

Correctly

Top 10 CONDOM Tips



1 Decide to use condoms together with your partner.



2 Carefully tear edge of the foil pack and open the package so that you don't damage the condom inside.



3 Place the condom on the erect penis before intimate contact. Hold the tip of the condom to allow room for the sperm.



4 With the other hand, unroll the condom over your erect penis right down to the base. You are now ready for intimate contact with your partner.



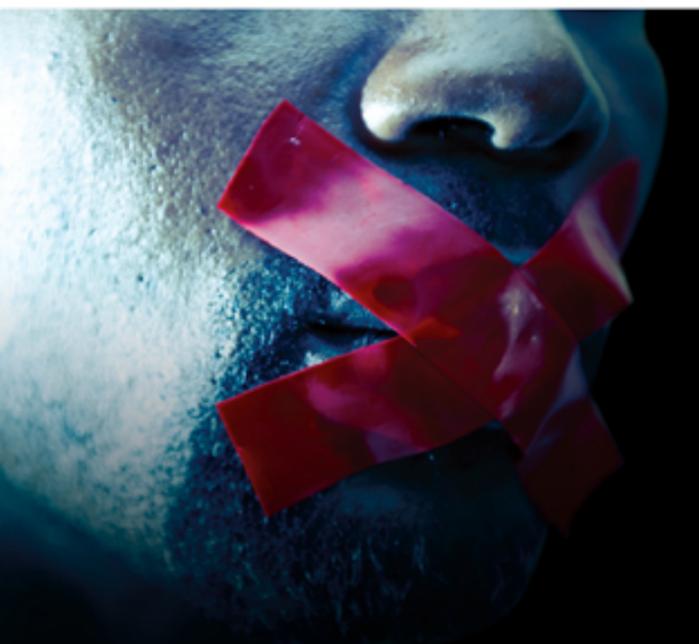
5 After ejaculation (discharge), hold the condom at the base of your penis and pull out of your partner before your penis becomes soft. Slide the condom off your penis without spilling any sperm.



6 Dispose of the used condom immediately into a trash bin, pit latrine, burn or bury it. Do not put it into the toilet.

1. Admit you have sexual feelings.
2. Discuss sex with your partner and plan together. Who should buy the condoms? What brand do you prefer?
3. Buy condoms and check the expiration date on the condom package.
4. Keep condoms in a cool, dry place such as your bedroom. Do not keep condoms in your wallet or glove compartment of your car because the heat could damage them. Carry condoms in your purse or front pocket of your trousers.
5. Carry condoms whenever you think you will have sex.
6. If you have never used a condom, practice in private to reduce anxiety, nervousness or shyness.
7. Do not reuse a condom. Use a new condom every time you have sex.
8. Only use one condom for every sexual act.
9. If extra lubrication is desired, only use water-based lubricants such as K-Y Jelly found in pharmacies and supermarkets. Never use Vaseline, lotion, or other oil-based products as this may cause the condom to break.
10. Remember, even if you think you trust your partner, it's important to use condoms because you never know who else your partner may be having sex with.

Condoms are provided free of charge at every government clinic and health facility.



Break the Silence

Women and Condoms

We all have a right to protect our health. In a time of HIV and AIDS, condoms provide sexually active people with a chance to exercise this right. In this issue we ask how socially acceptable it is for women in Zambia to initiate condom use in relationships. Is it okay for women to negotiate for or demand safer sex? Should women carry condoms when they plan to have sex? We think so! Let's find out what others have to say.



I have no problem with women who carry condoms because they are just trying to be responsible for their health and that of their partner. When a woman says she has a condom and she wants to use it, it does not mean that she is promiscuous or that she does not trust you but that she understands the kind of time we are living in.

Personally, I only have one partner and I have no problem with her wanting to use protection because I know she still loves and trusts me.

It's better for people who have many partners to use condoms. It will help with protecting each partner. I don't think new HIV infections can be completely stopped because not everyone uses condoms.

Kelvin Kafula



Yes women should carry condoms so that they can protect themselves. If you are not married but having sex then you definitely need to use condoms because you do not know what the other person is doing when you are not there.

I am in a long distance relationship and my boyfriend has no problem with my insistence on condoms.

Moira - 24



Yes, women should carry condoms in order to protect themselves [when they plan to have sex]. Some men intentionally run out of condoms and if a woman has her own then unprotected sex is prevented. In the past, people thought that condoms represented a lack of trust between partners or that women who used them had loose morals.

We now know that condoms are our best shot at reducing new HIV infections. Abstinence is the best option for people who are not yet married but we know that many of them are and will keep having sex, so condoms become very important in such situations.

Maureen Mwangani - 40

It's not a problem for women to ask to use a condom when having sex.



This shows that you the woman cares about your health and also is responsible.

It's important these days to protect each other from diseases and a woman asking to use a condom is the first step to making sure that happens.

Chrispin Mwelwa - 23

GAME TIME

Help the sperm find its way to the tip of the condom.



Remember there's **NO WAY OUT!**

YOUR SPACE

Where your views get heard and your questions answered!

Tell Us!
How do you discuss condom use with your partner? Tell us on livetoday@cshzambia.com

You Told Us!

In the last issue we asked you to tell us if you thought we could stop having many sexual partners. Here are your responses.

It is possible. I stick to my wife only and I think many others can manage.
I. Morgans, Kitwe

Yes we can stop. Extra marital affairs affect our spouses and families negatively; homes get broken and innocent men, women and children suffer the consequences. Such partnerships increase the risk of getting STIs including the incurable HIV. My children and I are victims of this tendency of a husband having many sexual partners with no regard for the wife and children. My former husband, whom I divorced, infected me with HIV which I unknowingly passed on to my two children at birth.
N. Chewe

Your Advice

In the last issue we featured Nickson Mweene who has two wives. He told us that it was okay for a man to have more than one partner if he could support them but that it was unacceptable for women. He also said men could assess who to use a condom with and who not to. This is the advice you gave him:

Nickson you said you can assess who to use a condom with and that if you meet a girl you can stop using a condom after knowing her well enough. My advice to you is to go with your partner for an HIV test because knowing her well will not kill the virus in her. She can be nice and decent but HIV positive. Be wise and go for a test.
Chiku

If men could properly assess when picking extra partners and when or when not to use a condom then there would probably be no HIV and AIDS today. I am sure that if Nickson had assessed well, he would not be in the situation he is. It is such mindsets that perpetuate these diseases. A man can err just like a woman can.
Chama

Your Questions

Tell Us!
Do you have a burning question about your relationships and HIV? Email your questions to livetoday@cshzambia.com

Here are the answers to the questions you asked.

Question: Scared of HIV test

Hi,
I am a single parent who is afraid to go for an HIV test. I have been a pillar to two of my family members who are HIV positive and I worry that should I also turn out positive, I will not know what to do. I am scared because I wonder about how strong I would be for myself. I know very well I haven't been very faithful and at one time I was having a crowded bed. Right now I am seeing someone but we both don't know our status and unfortunately we've met without using protection.

Kindly advise.

MB

Answer:

Dear MB,
Worries can kill you. Many people fear taking an HIV test. It is a brave and bold step. The good thing is that you have already accepted that you may be at risk. Please go to a centre where you can be counseled and get tested – go with a friend if possible. Also talk to your girlfriend. An HIV test result, whether positive or negative, will free your mind of worry. You will be able to make choices about how to move forward with your sexual life.

Question: I love her but...

I am in a relationship but some people tell me that my partner is a problem and others suspect her of having AIDS because she was once in a relationship with a business man who is known to be infected. When I asked her to go for VCT with me she refused. I love her very much and we are planning to get married. I don't know what to do. Please help.

Nyambe

Answer:

You are planning to get married to her but you are not talking to each other about one of the most important things – a healthy life free from HIV. If you marry her now, it will be a short term gain but a long term loss. Imagine a happy wedding, and then a long period of ill health. Please talk to your girlfriend about your worries and why the two of you must test for HIV together. Once you do this, it will be the beginning of an honest relationship. If she still refuses, seek a counsellor to help your girlfriend understand.

Question: I want to protect myself

Hi, I'm a sexually active young man who is usually involved with multiple sexual partners mostly one-night-stands. I have no knowledge of the HIV statuses of these people so I would like to know how I can stay safe from HIV and other STIs. How can I thoroughly protect myself?

Answer:

First, let's focus on making sure you don't get HIV – use condoms for ALL your sexual encounters. Secondly, ask yourself why you only seem to want one night stands and not a relationship. One night stands can be exciting at first, but can eventually become boring. A steady sexual relationship, that is free of HIV, and with one individual is very satisfying.

Question: I want more sex

We are young in marriage and every night I want to have sex with my wife she says she is tired. This has forced me to go and have another sex partner.

Answer:

Sex every night can be tiring, especially if it is not enjoyable. When asking for sex from your wife, please try to find out how you can please her. Some men measure their love by how often they have sex. Sex should result in a good feeling of satisfaction for both the woman and the man. It should not be a duty. Getting another sexual partner opens the doors for HIV infection, especially if the sex you are having is unprotected. Think about this.

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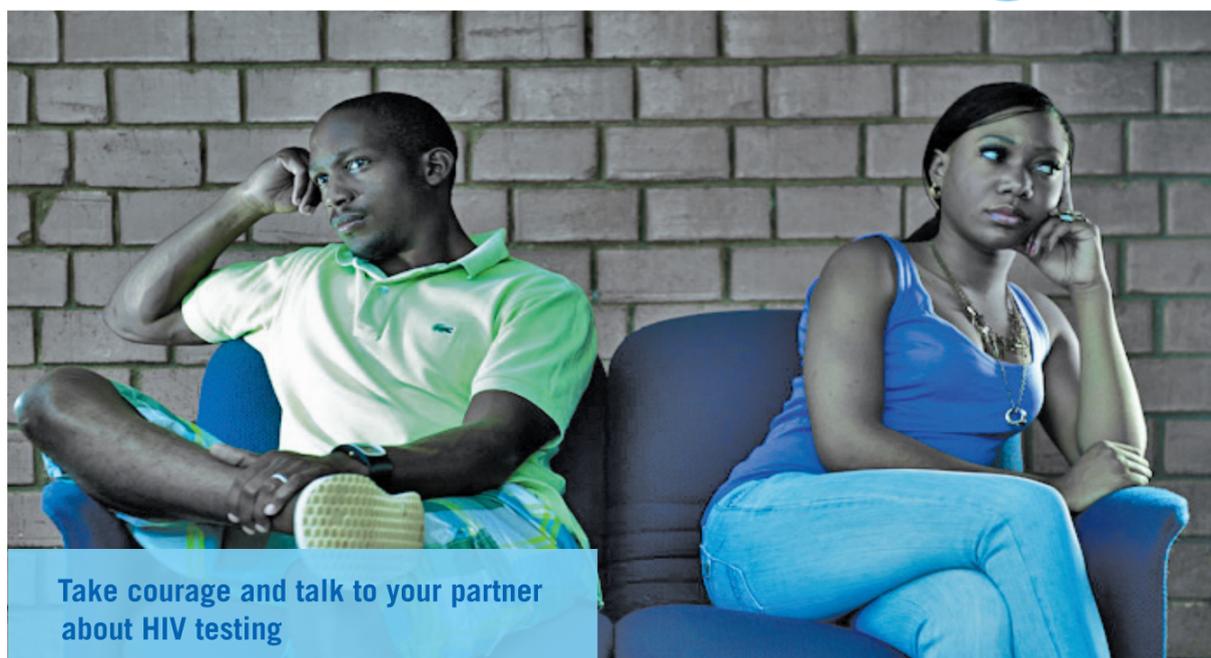
Pg 2: Going for an HIV test

Pg 3: Break The Silence

Pg 4: Your Space

FREE
COPY

Take Courage



Take courage and talk to your partner about HIV testing

“One day I found out that I had been awarded a scholarship to study abroad. As I filled out the acceptance form, I came across the health section. It indicated that I should have a health check up and be tested for any infectious diseases. During my health check, my doctor informed me that I must be tested for HIV since it is an infectious disease. I reluctantly scheduled the appointment.

The days leading up to the appointment felt like an eternity. I was terrified of what the test might tell me about myself. Had I been safe? The day of the HIV test, I waited for my friend at the entrance of the testing centre. She was stuck in traffic... I had to go alone. The counsellor proceeded to counsel me and take my blood test. She informed me the results would be ready in 10 minutes.

In those 10 minutes, I began sweating so much that my blouse became wet. I wondered what would happen to me if my results came back positive. Would I still receive my scholarship? What would my future look like? Healthy? Sick?

The counsellor announced my results were ready. My friend was still far away. Again, I went in alone. The counsellor encouraged me to receive my results even without my friend. She sat me down and told me my results. The test was negative. Despite that, I began sweating even more and collapsed on the floor. The counsellor helped me up and laid me on a couch. She calmed me and advised me to ask my husband to also get an HIV test.

When my friend arrived, I told her my results and we went to celebrate with a delicious lunch. Two weeks later I returned with my husband so that he too would be tested for HIV. He was also found negative. From that time onwards, we were able to openly discuss our sex life and how to protect each other from HIV.”

What is not known cannot be managed. If you do not know your HIV status, it is difficult to make important decisions about how to best protect your health.

Getting an HIV blood test, known as Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) or HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT), is the surest way of knowing your HIV status. If you test negative, plan how to maintain your status. If you test positive, plan to keep yourself and your loved ones healthy.

“Knowing your HIV status and that of your sexual partner is a key step in reducing your risk of getting infected with HIV.”

Some people try to guess their HIV status and that of their partner by how they look on the outside. They think that if a person looks healthy, they must be healthy. This method does not work because a person can look healthy and not feel sick, but still have HIV.

There are also parents who think they can know their HIV status by knowing the status of their child. If the child is healthy, they think they must be too. It is impossible to know your status based on the status of someone else, not even someone in your family.

Knowing your HIV status and that of your sexual partner is a key step in reducing your risk of getting infected with HIV. Many people do not get tested for HIV due to fear. However, like many people who have been tested before you, it is possible to overcome this fear. One of the best ways to overcome your fear is to speak to someone close to you, such as a friend or relative, about your worries. Ask this person to accompany you when you get tested. This will give you the encouragement and support you need.

Musonda shared her experience with us. Unaware of her HIV status, she unknowingly passed on the virus to her two children at birth.

“My former husband, whom I divorced 13 years ago, had many sexual partners, with no regard for me and the children. Little did I know that I was infected with HIV which I then passed to my sons during birth. It is quite a challenge especially for me because I feel guilty that I put them in this predicament but through God’s greatness they are surviving on ARVs.”

Musonda’s story shows us how dangerous it is when you are unaware of your HIV status and that of your partner; it becomes very difficult to protect yourself and those you love. You can prevent this from happening to you by overcoming your fears and going for an HIV test.

Fear should not stand in the way of knowing your HIV status. Take courage to know your status. Remember, your life is in your hands.

How many people are you having sex with?



Have you thought about HIV?

safe love think talk act

USAID CSH

What happens when you go for an HIV test

Here is what to expect when going for VCT:



1

TALK AND PLAN

Talk to your partner about going for VCT or HIV testing. This should be part of your regular health plan, just like checking your blood pressure and testing your eye sight. Select which clinic/centre to go to for testing.



2

ATTEND

When you or you and your partner arrive at the testing site, you will be brought into a private room for a private discussion called counselling by a professional counsellor. Your discussion will not be shared with or listened to by anybody else.



3

PRE-COUNSELLING

The counsellor will begin with a pre-testing counselling session. During this session, the counsellor will explain the testing process to you, assess your risk of being infected, and answer any questions, worries or doubts that you and your partner may have. You are free to share any information and ask any questions to the counsellor, he or she is there to help you.



4

TESTING

The testing will take place either in the same room used for counselling, or possibly in another room specifically used for testing. To test you for HIV, the counsellor will prick your finger with a small needle to collect a very small blood sample. The blood sample will then be placed on a piece of testing paper. The chemicals on the paper will react with your blood and determine whether you are HIV positive or negative. The counsellor will then repeat the same process with the second person. The results will be available within 2 minutes of the test.

5



RESULTS

The counsellor will discuss with you and your partner about the meaning of positive and negative test results. The counsellor will then give both you and your partner your results. Finally, you will decide how you and your partner will continue living a healthy life together.

The only way to know your status is to go for HIV testing, also known as Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT). The testing is a simple process and takes on average 30 minutes. If you are in a relationship, it is highly recommended that you go with your partner. This will allow the two of you to plan a healthy future together regardless of the results. If you are not comfortable going with your partner, go for testing on your own or with a friend. As scary as it may be to go for testing, knowing your HIV status will give you peace of mind. Why waste time worrying and not knowing your HIV status?

The possibilities:



Both of you are found negative

- o Plan how you and your partner will maintain your HIV negative status.
- o Go back for another test after 3 months to confirm your status. You may test HIV negative when you are still in the window period. The window period is a time ranging from 3-12 weeks after a person has been exposed to HIV. During this time the HIV test cannot yet detect if you are HIV positive.



Both of you are found positive

- o It is still possible to lead a healthy life when HIV positive. You must use condoms when having sex with your partner to prevent possible reinfection and mixing of different HIV types. If you choose to have sex with anybody else besides your partner, you must also use a condom to prevent them from getting infected with HIV.



One of you is found positive and the other negative

- o This is known as a discordant couple.
- o This can be a difficult time as a couple, but do not assume your time together is finished. Discordant couples can still have healthy and happy lives together. Ask the counsellor for specific tips on how you and your partner can remain healthy. Condoms will play an important role in your sex life to prevent the person who is negative from becoming HIV positive too. Remember that if your partner is found positive, this does not automatically mean they have been unfaithful.

VCT is available at your nearest government clinic or any other HIV testing centre.

Are you at risk?

It is important for everyone to know their HIV status at all times in order to keep healthy. Ask yourself the following questions to see if you are at risk:

1. Have you ever had sex with someone whose HIV status you didn't know?
2. Have you ever had sex without a condom?
3. Have you ever had more than one sexual partner?
4. Do you start a sexual relationship soon after meeting a person?
5. While in a sexual relationship, do you start a new one?

6. Have you ever taken alcohol before having sex and you don't remember whether you used a condom or not?
7. Have you ever given or received sex in exchange for money, gifts or favours?
8. Do you ever use two condoms at the same time?
9. Do you have a parent living with HIV or have you lost a parent and don't know what he/she died of?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, you are at risk of HIV infection. Go for HIV counselling and testing at the nearest health centre.

Break the Silence:

going for VCT with your partner



Choosing to get tested for HIV is a life saving decision. Knowing your HIV status empowers you to make correct choices about your sex life. Although health is a private matter, your partner has a right to know your HIV status to best protect him or herself. In this edition we asked readers whether or not they would go for VCT with their partners.



Yes I would. As a married man it is very important for me and anyone else to know their status and that of their partner. If you are positive, there are drugs now so you can make use of those ARVs. Knowing your status helps you make the right decisions and take whatever precautions need to be taken. My wife and I have two children and we plan to have more so it is important that we are healthy.

I would say to other couples that the right thing to do is share their VCT results with each other especially if the result is positive. It is selfish for one person to get tested and maybe come out positive and even start taking ARVs without informing their partner. In such a situation, the partner that does not know is disadvantaged.

Giyani Sakala – Coordinator: Research and Knowledge Management



I have gone for VCT alone once and with my wife twice. It does not help to avoid knowing your HIV status or trying to hide it from your partner because one day you will get sick and the doctor will test you

for everything including HIV and tell you the results. Initially I used to be scared of testing, but after I went the first time I realised there was no need to be. I would encourage all couples to go for VCT in order to protect their health.

Mark Vlahakis – Chef



I would because it would help me know how to go about my life. I would also want to know my partner's status in order to understand how best we can live. There are two possible outcomes;

negative or positive and people need the right kind of counselling in order to make the right choices. What if one of you comes out positive, are you ready to continue being together? These are the things that the right kind of counselling can help with because sometimes people die due to lack of the right knowledge. There are people who feel they cannot go for VCT because they have had sexual relations with someone for a long time so they think if there is any disease to be caught, they have already caught it. The truth is it is still best to know your status so that if you plan to have children you know exactly how to go about it.

Thelma Kilani, 26 – Business Development Services Officer

Yes. My partner and I go for VCT regularly and our latest test was in December. We do this because we want to know the state of our health. The first time I ever tested I was alone and I was very scared, but I was determined so I went ahead and tested. After that I asked my partner to go with me and also test and he had no problem with that so we went. I would advise other people to go so that they can know their status. Whether negative or positive, it is important to know so that they can know the best way for them to proceed.

Glady Lambwe – Sales Lady

Lovers' Guide

HOW TO BE A SAFE LOVER

When Valentine's Day rolled around on February 14th, did you have big extravagant plans for your loved one? Or did you let the day pass by like it was any other? The truth is everyone wants to feel a little love, whether it's on Valentine's Day or not. But the real question is, what kind of love are we giving to our partners? Is it responsible, thoughtful, and safe love? Instead of the one lonely day of love in February, why not show your love to that special someone 365 days a year. Here are some suggestions. Remember you do not have to rob a bank to enjoy good times, you can show love without diamonds but if you want to splurge, we have a few tips for you too.



Having fun while spending less

1. Make dinner together and enjoy it by candlelight
2. Rent a movie and cuddle
3. Give each other massages
4. Go to a concert together of your favourite artist
5. Go out for ice cream

If you have money to spend

1. Have dinner at a fancy restaurant
2. Go on holiday together
3. Go on a romantic Zambian safari
4. Go shopping together
5. Take your partner salsa dancing

Showing someone you love them doesn't have to end up in sex. There are many fun and creative ways to show someone how you feel. However, if you are choosing to have sex, make sure you are prepared and use a condom. Whatever you choose, make sure you practice safe love!



I don't think I would because I am scared of getting tested and knowing my status. There are two possible outcomes at VCT and if you are positive then what do you do? Would I find supportive people

to share my result with? I think that is what many of us fear. We see how those who come out positive get treated by people who are supposed to love and support them. We see how families and friends shun them and make fun of them, and talk about them like they are already dead. If you come out positive you would not be able to interact the way you normally do because friends would shun you and talk behind your back. Even if you wanted a partner and honestly told her your status she would probably go and tell everyone else and they would all ridicule you. So I think the hardest part about VCT is coming out positive and not finding acceptance and support. These days you can get HIV even if you have just been with one partner so being positive is a real possibility for many people.

Enoch Phiri – 24



YOUR SPACE

Where your views get heard and your questions answered. Tell us your thoughts. Write to us at livetoday@cshzambia.com



YOU TOLD US

In the last issue we asked you how you discuss condoms with your partners. Here are your responses.

Question: How do you discuss condom use with your partner? You told us!

I was brought up in the culture of condoms. There is no discussion necessary, I carry a condom and use it consistently even with my long time partner. We have to be realistic about the times. HIV is no joke, no need to play around with your life.
Mulenga C

For me it's usually straightforward, when he just starts getting intimate I ask before things get heated up so that I know whether to continue or not. I don't, however, ask in advance because I may seem a bit too forward in case the guy is not even thinking about having sex.
Brenda Sakala

Sometimes talking about condoms brings up the issue of trust; a partner may think that you don't trust her. The truth is if you don't talk about it just out of fear of what they will think then you have even bigger things than just condoms to discuss. I vote wrapping it up.
J. Musukuma

I usually ask if he has a condom and insist that if he does not have one then we can't have sex. I am very careful not to put my life at risk. It's better to be safe than sorry.
Mary

YOUR QUESTIONS

Here are answers to questions you asked

Question: Pain during Sex

My girlfriend and I are having a problem during sex. Every time we have sex, whether protected or unprotected, she always complains her private parts are in pain. I advised her to see a doctor but she told me that the doctor just gave her some pills for stomach pain. What should I do about this? Please help me.

Secondly, my girlfriend produces too much vagina fluids when having sex. Is there anything we can do to reduce the fluid? Help.
Evans

Answer:

Dear Evans, thank you for your concerns about your girlfriend. Pain during sex is never a good thing and can be signs of an illness. Your girlfriend needs to see a gynecologist, a doctor who specializes in female reproductive health. The doctor will give her the proper care she needs. Also important, always have protected sex with your girlfriend. You don't want to risk exposing yourself to disease either.

Lastly, production of vaginal fluid is normal for women during sex. This fluid lubricates the vagina and makes it more comfortable to have sex. Please do not ask your girlfriend to do anything to dry out her vagina. This would lead to even more painful sex and possible tears in the vagina.

Question: Please my partner

I am in a relationship with one person. What can I do to make sure the relationship stays firm and stable? We know each other's HIV status and have had a long relationship for 6 years solid. I love her so much and I have promised to be faithful to her.
Valentine

Answer:

Dear Valentine, you are a very considerate and kind lover! If you want a stable and long relationship, start by telling your girlfriend so that she knows. This will strengthen your relationship. But I cannot tell you what things you can do with your girlfriend to make your relationship strong, only she can. So why not ask her? In general, women love men who listen, show respect, help with chores in the house, and plan and discuss family issues. Try your best to be this man.

Question: Worried about Circumcision

I am 28 and in love with a woman aged 25 who I want to marry next year. She wants me to go for circumcision before we start sleeping together. Is this advisable for a person as old as I am? How long does it take to heal? A friend told me that circumcision makes the penis shrink and reduces sexual pleasure because the skin that is cut off is the most sensitive so what remains is just the numb part. Is this true?
Kebby

Answer:

Dear Kebby, men can be circumcised at any age, no one is too old. Medical male circumcision is encouraged to increase hygiene and reduce your chances of contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases. After the quick procedure, the penis takes 6 weeks to heal completely. During this time you should not engage in any sexual activity. Contrary to what your friend has told you, male circumcision does not shrink the penis and does not lead to numbness. The skin underneath the foreskin is the most sensitive. Once the foreskin is removed the skin underneath becomes slightly less sensitive because it is now exposed. However, this could enhance your sex life, allowing you to control your body more and enjoy sex for longer.

Question: Wanting to Test

My boyfriend and I have been dating for eight months but do not know each other's HIV status. At what point in the relationship should you talk about getting tested together? Every time I say we should go he says I am rushing it because we are simply dating not planning to get married or have children. We always have protected sex but I'm still worried about what would happen if the condom broke. How can I convince him?
Worried

Answer:

Dear Worried, because you and your boyfriend are already having sexual relations, now is a good time to have an HIV test. Tell him that an HIV test is for anyone who is sexually active and not just for people planning to have a family. You may have to find someone that he will listen to so that he can be further advised to get tested.

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Voluntary Counselling & Testing	Abstinence
Prevention of Mother to To Child Transmission	Partner reduction
Anti-Retroviral Treatment	Condom use
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Male circumcision	Human trafficking
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Live Today

Your Health Is In Your Hands

Pg. 2 A Healthy Pregnancy, A Healthy Baby

Pg. 3 Break the Silence

Pg. 4 Your Space

FREE COPY

THE SAFEST CHOICE



Knowing your HIV status is the first step in making sure your baby is born HIV-negative.

Every year, almost 80,000 babies in Zambia are at risk of contracting HIV from their HIV positive mothers. Today, pregnant women can choose to get special health services to change this reality.

Mother-to-child transmission of HIV happens when an HIV-positive mother passes the disease to her baby. This can happen during pregnancy, during birth, or while breastfeeding. You can prevent this by starting to talk with your health worker.

Here are the stories of two HIV positive women and the effect of the choices they made during their pregnancies.

Life's Biggest Regret

"Falling pregnant was a new and exciting thing for me and my husband. This excitement soon turned to anxiety when I was asked about my HIV status at the antenatal clinic. They said I had to know for my own sake and that of the baby. This discussion made me very uncomfortable. After counselling, I told them I would think about it and return for testing, but I did not have enough courage. The birth of my son in June 2004 was such a wonderful time; we were overjoyed! Shortly afterwards, the baby fell ill and stayed ill, so we took him to the hospital. My worst fears came true when the test confirmed he was HIV positive. I also tested HIV positive, but my greatest grief came from the fact that my innocent baby was now infected with HIV because of my choice to not know my status and therefore unknowingly passing the virus to him. This remains the biggest regret of my life." – Sarah

Reward

"When I was pregnant with my third child, everything at my antenatal clinic felt like a formality. I thought I had seen and done it all. This was the same casual attitude I had when I accepted the recommended counselling and testing for HIV. I

"Your baby is HIV-positive' is something no parent should ever have to hear."

remember even encouraging some women who were terrified of testing. To my utter shock, I tested positive. I was confused, devastated, and very afraid. It was a difficult time. I decided to take my counselling seriously and follow every recommended step to have an HIV negative baby. I had my doubts along the way, but I adhered to the treatment, and my reward was a baby born free of HIV. It was such a relief. As an HIV-positive woman, having a healthy baby is a desperate desire, and seeing it happen is a wonderful experience." – Mwape

Sarah and Mwape's stories tell us how important it is to make important but sometimes difficult decisions before and during pregnancy, like testing for HIV. It is possible for women who are HIV positive to give birth to HIV negative babies.

When you get pregnant, the most important action to take is to go for antenatal care and take an HIV test. Knowing your status will help you and your partner plan for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Every child's future is full of possibilities. Being HIV-positive does not mean your child must also be HIV-positive.

**I travel a lot for work...
I get lonely, but Mary
keeps me company**



Have you thought about HIV?

safe love think talk act



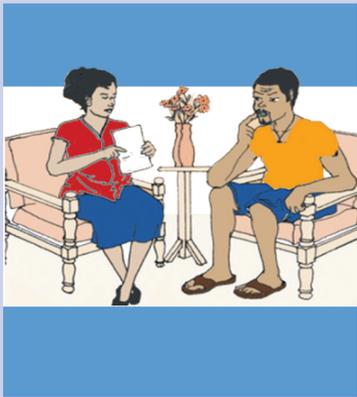
A HEALTHY PREGNANCY A HEALTHY BABY

To have a healthy pregnancy and a safe birth, every woman is advised to go for antenatal care. At the clinic, every woman is counselled to take an HIV test. After getting your results, your health care provider will guide you through the steps to help you have a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby.

Below are the steps every woman and her partner should follow when planning on getting pregnant, during pregnancy, and after delivery.

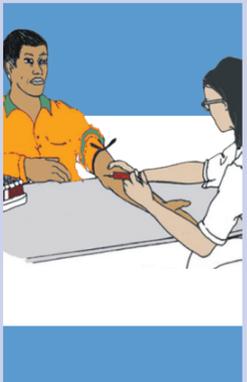
IF YOU ARE HIV POSITIVE AND PREGNANT

Before pregnancy:



- ◆ Go for HIV testing before getting pregnant and use family planning until you are ready to become pregnant. If you are HIV-positive, seek medical counselling to make sure you get pregnant safely.

During Pregnancy:



- ◆ Go for antenatal care with your partner as soon as you know you are pregnant. Prepare a birth plan with your partner and family (where to deliver, how to get there, etc.).
- ◆ With your partner, go for an HIV test and know your status. If you are HIV positive, seek advice from a health worker on how to have a baby born free of HIV. If you are HIV negative, talk to your health worker about how to stay negative.
- ◆ Prepare for birth by taking your medicine as instructed and planning to deliver in a health facility.
- ◆ Deliver in a health facility

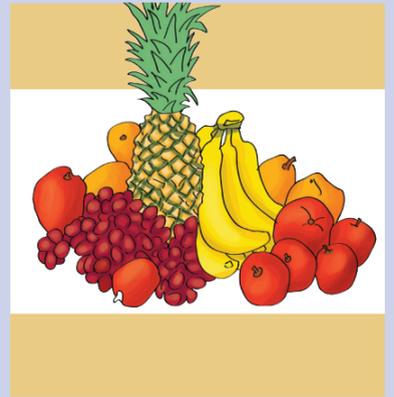
After Delivery:



- ◆ Only give your baby breast milk for 6 months.
- ◆ Give your baby his or her HIV prevention medicine every day and take him or her to all follow up visits at the health facility.
- ◆ Take your HIV medicine, if prescribed, and follow all other instructions given to you by your health worker.
- ◆ Talk to your health worker about family planning options.

IF YOU ARE HIV POSITIVE AND YOUR BABY IS HIV NEGATIVE

Feeding:



- ◆ Only give your baby breast milk for the first 6 months. Do not give your baby any food, water, gripe water, other liquids, semi-solids or solids, unless prescribed by your health worker.
- ◆ At 6 months, start giving your baby other foods which are rich in nutrients and continue breastfeeding up to 12 months.

Treatment and Testing:



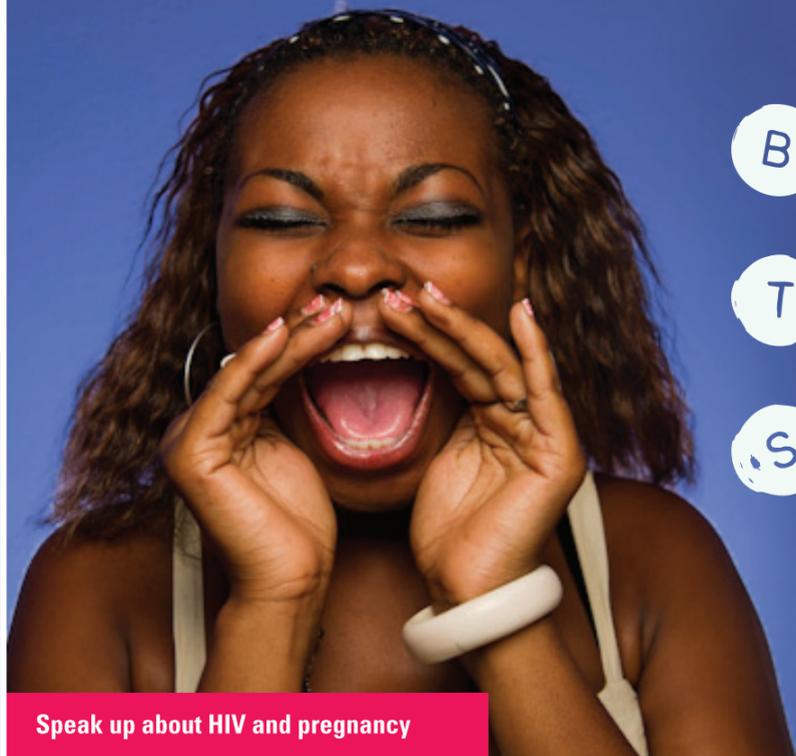
- ◆ Give your baby HIV prevention medicine every day as instructed by your health worker. Stop giving the medicine 1 week after stopping breastfeeding (at 12 months).
- ◆ Take your baby for HIV testing at 6 weeks, 6 months, 1 year, and 1 year 6 months. All testing times are important.
- ◆ Vaccinate your baby according to the regular schedule.

Support:



- ◆ Discuss all your health plans such as family planning, nutrition, and post natal care for you and your baby with your family so that you can receive the support you need.

***Remember, having a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby starts by going for antenatal care as soon as you know you or your partner is pregnant.**



B R E A K T H E S I L E N C E

Speak up about HIV and pregnancy

WHAT WOULD YOU OR YOUR PARTNER DO IF YOU TEST HIV POSITIVE WHILE PREGNANT?

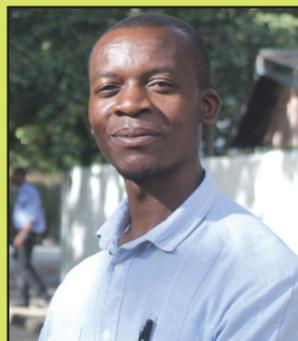
Having children is a wonderful gift of life. Planning for a child starts before the baby is born. This includes knowing your HIV status. Many mothers do not know their status before giving birth. When you don't know your status, you risk passing HIV on to your children. Women must be encouraged to take an HIV test before they give birth, so they can take medication to prevent transmission of HIV. In this edition we asked, *What would you or your partner do if you tested HIV-positive while pregnant?*



Life would continue. He has been my husband for almost 13 years now and nothing can change that, because I love him and we have been through enough together. I would go for VCT [voluntary

counselling and testing] just to confirm and do everything to make sure that my baby stays negative with the help of medical experts at the hospital or clinic. I would continue living positively.

DOROTHY CHISIMBA



Before concluding anything, I would go for a test so I can know my status. If I am tested positive then we will both seek medical help and if we have to start taking medicine we will and stay together. But if I

am negative she is already my wife, we will protect ourselves by using condoms. When you love someone nothing matters because love is stronger than anything else.

NEVERS SIMBOKOLA



I would continue with the relationship and accept the situation. Accept the whole condition because if I decided to leave her, her condition might get worse on that account and I couldn't live with myself knowing I led her to

an early grave. I love her, and if a new development occurs, like many others still will, we would stick together, because we are bound by love for each other and nothing can change.

ELIAS CRISH



Personally, as one who is about to get married, I can go ahead with my wedding preparations because we love each other, but I would also go for VCT and seek professional medical advice and lead a very positive life. So my

answer to what I would do if I fell pregnant and was found positive is, I would keep my baby.

JANE PHIRI

MORE TO LIFE

At 19 years old, Mwansa Mandalema packs more into her life than the average teenage girl. Every Tuesday and Wednesday she wakes up early to prepare for the group discussion she leads with young people at the University Teaching Hospital at the Paediatrics Centre of Excellence (PCoE). She then goes through her scripts for the radio show that she will present in the afternoon. In between, she has to make sure she does all her chores and doesn't forget to take her medication.

Orphaned at an early age, Mwansa soon discovered she had HIV when she fell ill as a young child. She was put on treatment and immediately enrolled in PCoE's support programme. At the centre, she learnt that she could still live a full life and pursue her dreams, even though she has HIV.

Mwansa is now a graduate of PCoE but still returns every counselling day to help other young people, in person and on the air. She talks with her peers about what it means to be a teenager, how to handle emotions, and how to interact and be responsible, especially as a teenager living with HIV.

"The first time I had to go on radio and talk about my experience coping with HIV I sweated a lot and was not sure whether people would accept me. But I just became brave and thought about all the people that I would help, and since that day I give daily talks on the radio about living with HIV as a teenager. I love my life but I also know that my being HIV positive could have been avoided. It is important for mothers to prevent this from happening to their unborn children, just like I will have to do when I have a child."

***Names have been changed*



YOUR SPACE

Where your views get heard and your questions answered. Tell us your thoughts. Write to us at: livetoday@cshzambia.com

YOU TOLD US

Question: What are you doing to be a safe lover?

- * **I only have one sexual partner and that is my wife. We are both faithful to each other so we consider ourselves safe lovers - Mweemba.**
- * **I practice safe sex by using a condom every time I sleep with someone. My health is my personal responsibility and I take it seriously and expect others to do the same - TC.**
- * **I'm being a safe lover by not forcing my girl friend to have sex before she's ready. We have agreed to first wait until we have dated for a whole year and then go for VCT before we finally start having sex- Morgan**
- * **I'm a safe lover because I only sleep with my boyfriend and we use protection all the time - Shirley**

NEXT QUESTION

Question: What prevents people from using condoms all the time?

YOUR QUESTIONS

Here are answers to questions you asked

Question: How can I be safe?

Hi. I am in love with a girl, we have been together for a year and a half. We both haven't gone for VCT. The problem is when we make love, we always start with condoms but we end up having unprotected sex. How do I become safe?

Answer

It is obvious from your letter that you are thinking about safety from HIV. Thinking is good, but it is not enough – you have to do something – go for an HIV test. Whatever the result of the HIV test, protecting yourself and others from HIV remains important. Talk with your partner so that you can gain trust and confidence in each other. Constant worry about your health can eventually spoil your relationship. You must also know how to use condoms.

Question: Irregular periods

I really want to know why I miss my monthly periods while I am not pregnant?

Answer

It is normal for women to sometimes miss their monthly periods, even when not pregnant. This is referred to as irregular menses. The reasons for this situation are varied. The most common reason is hormonal imbalance. This means that there is a disruption in the balance of hormones that regulate your menses. Severe stress, weight gain and weight loss, various eating disorders, and alcohol consumption can all contribute and cause hormonal imbalance. Excessive exercising or body straining activities can also lead to an irregular menstrual cycle. This is the reason why many athletes encounter missed periods. Hormonal imbalance can, however, be treated. If it persists you may want to see your doctor or a gynaecologist.

Question: Premature ejaculation

My girlfriend is the same age as me and my mother doesn't want me to marry her and marry someone younger than me. I am confused? Then what do I do, my girlfriend wants to leave me because I can only last 2 minutes during sex though I am circumcised? What do I do?

Answer

For centuries, it had been traditionally acceptable for men to marry women younger than themselves. Your mother is uncomfortable because this girl is as old as you are. You need to nicely explain to your mother that this is the woman you love and want, and not any other. Society is changing and it is not uncommon now to find men who marry women their age or older.

Now about your second question, at least one in three men complain of a similar problem like you. This is referred to as premature ejaculation. Research reveals that the average time of men with premature ejaculation is about 1.8 minutes. This is when a man ejaculates sooner during sexual intercourse than they or their partner would like. As long as it happens infrequently, it's not a cause for concern. However, if you regularly ejaculate sooner than you and your partner wish, such as before intercourse begins or shortly afterward, it can be considered premature ejaculation. The possible causes of this may be due to psychological and biological factors. There are a variety of ways to overcome this. This includes medications, psychological counseling and sexual techniques that delay ejaculation. To address this fully and in confidence you may need to see a Urologist or a sex therapist.

Question: HIV and blood groups: Myth or fact?

Hi, how is it possible that people of different blood groups can't infect each other, is it a myth? Circumcision, what are the chances of one not getting infected? Is there a thing called partial circumcision?

Answer

Yes, it is a myth that people of different blood groups cannot infect each other with HIV. HIV passes from one person to another no matter their blood type. You can only get HIV by being exposed to HIV, which can be in any blood type you come into contact with whether it is the same or different from yours.

About circumcision, studies have shown that among other health benefits, circumcision can prevent HIV transmission from a woman to a man by up to 60%. However, it is important to remember that male circumcision only provides partial protection from HIV and you must still use a condom during sex.

Yes, there is such thing as a partial circumcision. It is usually practiced in traditional ceremonies, and means that only part of the foreskin is removed during circumcision. However, to gain all the benefits of male circumcision, such as reduced risk of HIV infection, I only recommend medical male circumcision where the entire foreskin is removed.

Question: Discordant couple

Can a couple where one is HIV positive and the other is HIV negative still get married?

Answer

A couple where one is HIV negative and the other is HIV positive is known as a discordant couple, and it is very possible for them to get married. Many discordant couples around the world live happy and healthy lives. However, there are some things to be aware of when you are a part of a discordant couple. First, it is very important for you and your partner to discuss how you will protect the HIV negative person from being infected. You must always use condoms during sex. Secondly, having HIV negative children is a possibility but needs some planning. Speak to your health worker about how to get pregnant safely while keeping the other person still HIV negative.

Do you have a burning question about your relationships and HIV? Email your questions to livetoday@cshzambia.com

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Your Health Is In Your Hands

Pg2 A Healthy Relationship

Pg3 Break the Silence

Pg4 Your Space

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Are you a spare wheel?



He got me a job, paid my house rent, paid my daughter's school fees, bought me a car and provided generous amounts of money for general upkeep. I felt that his financial commitment to me was enough consolation for

self-worth and the confidence that they are good enough to be a man's main and only partner. "

Broken Trust

"I had a sexual relationship with a workmate. I also had a steady girlfriend at the time, who is now my wife. The experience left me very insecure and I keep thinking if I did

"These days almost every sexual relationship is a health risk and it is an individual's responsibility to stay safe."

not being his first choice. I felt that I was more in charge than his wife and obviously better than her because he left

it and never got caught, how can I be sure that my wife is not doing the same to me and getting away with it?"

As exciting as these relationships might seem, we have learned from our readers that being someone's spare wheel could put you in an uncomfortable situation. Your feelings could get hurt, or even worse your health put in danger.

When you are in a sexual relationship, you should always keep in mind that you may be at risk of HIV infection. The more sexual partners you have, the larger the sexual network you are connected to. And the larger your sexual network, the higher your risk of HIV infection. Make sure you are aware of your sexual network, and take care to keep yourself and your partner free from HIV.

her to find me. We used condoms consistently for the first few weeks then just stopped without even talking about it. We were as good as married and condoms somehow felt like we did not trust each other. Two years after we met, I discovered that his wife had been ill for quite a long time. When she died, I decided to take an HIV test and I came out positive. I now have this disease to remind me of my irresponsible decision to have unprotected sex with a man who could obviously not be trusted. I should have known that if he could cheat on his wife, what was keeping him from cheating on me, only a girlfriend? Women need to have more

married man and it is not my first time, but I've always made sure to protect my health. I know that some excited people want to label and shame me as a home wrecker, disease carrier, side chick and whatever else, but what about the man? People need to take responsibility for their own marriages and stop blaming outsiders. These days almost every sexual relationship is a health risk and it is an individual's responsibility to stay safe."

Disease and Heartache

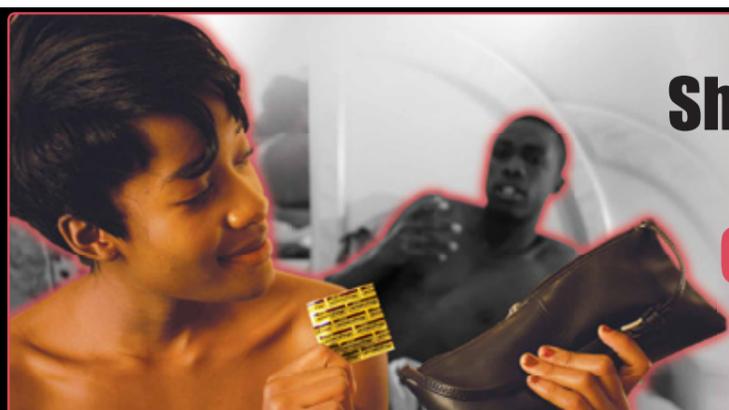
"I started dating a married man six years ago when I was 25 years old. As a single and unemployed mother, he was like a savior to me.

Spare wheel; side piece; wapambali; home breaker; ATM (Assistant to Madam).

These are just a few of the names that we use to describe the people we have "extra or outside" relationships with. There are many reasons people give for having more than one sexual partner. "He pays my bills," says one. "She does things my wife would never do," says another. Having many sexual partners often times doesn't bring the rewards we think it will. We asked our readers to share their experiences with us. Here are their stories.

Don't Blame Me

"I am in a relationship with a



She's not afraid to talk about condoms are you?

Have you thought about HIV?

safe love think talk act



••••• A Healthy Relationship •••••

A healthy relationship comes from a good balance between emotional and physical (sexual) satisfaction. Emotional satisfaction comes from having a trusting, caring, and respectful relationship with your partner. This allows you to talk openly to each other about important decisions in your life such as sex and money. Physical satisfaction is just as important. This happens when partners satisfy each other's sexual needs. It is also important for both partners to feel safe and secure from HIV and other diseases within the relationship. If you or your partner have sexual partners other than each other, it quickly increases your risk of HIV infection.

Emotional and physical satisfaction are tied together. If you are unhappy in one, you are likely to be unhappy in the other. If you are concerned about getting infected with HIV, it becomes difficult to enjoy a relationship both emotionally and physically.

Here is what can you do to protect yourself and your relationship from HIV.

Your One & Only

- Choose to have only one sexual partner who you are fully committed to. This is the only type of relationship where you can consider not using condoms. However, you can only do this if you:
 - 1. know your HIV status
 - 2. know the HIV status of your partner
 - 3. are completely faithful to your partner
 - 4. are absolutely sure that your partner is completely faithful to you
- It is very important for every sexually active person to be careful about the risks they are taking if they choose not to be faithful.

Condomize

Some of us are not ready to settle down and commit to just one partner. If you are in this situation and have more than one sexual partner, you must use condoms every time you have sex! This is very important so that you protect yourself from HIV infection. It is also important that you get tested on a regular basis (once every three months) so that you can be sure of your HIV status.

Remember, having more than one sexual partner connects you to a larger sexual network and therefore increases your chances of contracting HIV.

Wait Until it's Right

Another way to keep yourself safe from HIV infection is to abstain from sex. You can still have an intimate relationship with someone without choosing to have sex, so don't be afraid to make this choice. Even when you are abstaining, it is important to know how to protect yourself from HIV once you do become sexually active.

SEXUAL HEALTH

How to make sure you are in a sexually healthy relationship.

- Know your HIV status
- Know the HIV status of all your sexual partners
- Know what other sexual partners your partner(s) has
- Work with your partner to have an emotionally satisfying relationship
- Work with your partner to have a physically/sexually satisfying relationship
- Use condoms every time you have sex

OUR READERS SHARE THEIR STORIES ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIPS.

A healthy relationship is where you are trying to make each other happy, love each other and trying not to hurt each other's feelings. Though I love my wife I don't think we are in a healthy relationship or that my actions are honest and not hurtful. There are many times I have flirted with girls and she has found out. So now she constantly checks my phone and can never really trust anything I say or do. I damaged a part of us that could have achieved a healthy relationship. We are trying to work it out, but I keep slipping and she keeps threatening to leave. I guess it is not a healthy relationship. - EB.

A healthy relationship? Does such a thing exist? I'm not sure anymore. Well, ideally you would say a healthy relationship is one where you are honest, faithful, and trust your partner but now the lines have become so blurred I'm not so sure I even know what a healthy relationship is. I once got involved with someone who was already engaged to another person. Though in my head I knew it was not a healthy relationship I somehow managed to separate what was going on with me and what he had with her. Of course there is no logic to it and in the end we ended up getting our feelings hurt. Thank goodness that was all that was destroyed in this situation but yeah... I'm not sure I can say it would never happen again. - K

A healthy relationship is one that consists of honesty, trust and love. You and your partner should be able to treat each other right and be conscious of how actions may affect the relationship. We should be able to respect each other and be there for one another.

I don't think I am in a healthy relationship because my boyfriend is currently at school in another town and I only see him twice a year. We hardly communicate, so it makes it difficult for me to trust that he is being faithful to me. At the end of the day you can't control someone's feelings if he decides to do something with another girl. So I am constantly obsessing about it and it drives me crazy. Though I am still in the relationship and I love him I don't think it is a healthy one. - NS.

A healthy relationship is a combination of trust, communication, maturity and timeliness. You have to ask yourself what you want in a relationship and work towards getting those things ensuring that it is something healthy you are getting yourself into. I will not lie, the trust from my girlfriend did not come overnight, it's something that had to be built and something we continue to build. The most important thing for us is that we respect each other to be honest and open, even when we make mistakes. - P C.

I thought what I had was a healthy relationship because all that mattered was that we were so into each other. The truth is love is not enough. There has to be trust, there has to be respect and there has to be truthfulness. I fell in love with a guy who had another girl. I also had another guy. We cheated on our partners and though we said we would dump the other one, we didn't. I moved in with another friend of mine and before I knew it, the guy I was cheating with started cheating on me with my roommate. I was so devastated. I couldn't believe what had just happened to me. It made me realise that I was on a dangerous path not only emotionally but physically also. I have learnt my lesson. - V.



Having more than one sexual partner is a major driver of HIV in Zambia, and yet it has become a largely tolerated practice. Why have we become so accepting of this behavior?



In the African setup, men are regarded as superior and as such, having extra partners is an acceptable way of life. Traditional practices in rural areas have enhanced the perception of having more than one sexual partner. For example in certain Zambian tribes, a man can have as many relationships as he wants for as long as he can afford it financially. There is also an economic aspect to it where some women just do it for the money and men just buy sex for pleasure. Society tends to understand such women as merely seeking a livelihood. For younger men, having many sexual partners is a mere trend like fashion; they do it in order to brag about how many women they have been with. - Kaluba



I do not think they have become acceptable to everybody; it depends on who you are and what you believe in. I know there are some people who do not care and others who think there are certain circumstances in which multiple partners are justified. For example, when a woman is cheated on by her husband or boyfriend and she goes and does the same to him. She thinks let me also get myself a man on the side so I can prove to my partner that I have market (other men find me attractive). Some people will sympathise and accept her decision. Personally I don't think multiple partners are ever a good idea especially now when there are so many diseases. - Chipo Phiri



Society is more accepting now because morals have decayed and what a lot of people now consider right or wrong has changed a lot. People now are more accepting of and even justify what was previously considered wrong because some want to be seen as being more civilized, not traditional and not judgmental. Also, society tolerates certain thinking such as the infamous *minda zakudala*. Meaning that sexual relationships never really end and you can go back to old partners as and when you want no matter what your current situation is. Because of such thinking, you find that it is considered almost inevitable and therefore normal if the extra sex partner is someone you once were in a relationship with. - David Hamavhwa – Accountant



These days there is no real stigma against those having multiple sexual partners, people just look and say this is how the world now is. I think this is the kind of attitude this generation was born into and has now grown with. Most parents, whose own generation had different ideals, have now become so relaxed and accepting of what the younger generation considers normal. When the older generation tries to correct a younger person they are simply dismissed as old fashioned and overtime these older generations start adapting to the ways of the young. I wish to urge all the people who now consider having multiple sexual partners to be fashionable to reflect on the ideals that made past generations live such long and healthy lives. Let us not throw out all our customs as Zambians especially that of remaining faithful to one partner. - Innocent Daka – Security Officer

Word Puzzle

Play the game and find the words that people use to describe those 'extra' partners they have on the side of their main relationship.

Find:

- Side plate
- Wamukwapa
- Minority Shareholder
- MBA-Married But Available
- Side Kick
- Hand brake
- ATM-Assistant to Madam
- Emergency Exit
- Gooseberry
- Chitulilo
- Walking Stick
- Extra Curricular
- Time Share
- Side Plate
- Any Other Business
- Mbasela
- Luhali (Bed and Table)
- Wa Pambali

S I D E P L A T E M K M A
 W A M U K W A P A I A B T
 D E B S L E R T S N N A M
 S M M I U P H I I O Y M A
 D E B D H E A M D R O A S
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 W O T I P U D K G L S A A
 C H I T U L I L O D S I D
 W S C Y U A O I I E P L A
 Z E K U R R O P F R C A M
 G O O S E B E R R Y G B R
 Q L U H A L I G E R V L K
 G T G E V E T J U G D E G
 S E W A P A M B A L I I O

YOUR SPACE

Where your stories and opinions get heard.

You Told Us

We share some of your fellow readers' stories about their relationships.

"I am dating a married guy and we are happy together. He was my boyfriend and we were going to get married until he made somebody else pregnant and her family forced him to marry her. We decided to continue with our relationship because we love each other. This girl is the one who came between us and she's the one who needs to leave, not me" - KZ.

What are your views on KZ's story?

"I don't really have a serious girlfriend because I want to finish my studies first but sometimes when I go drinking with the guys, I meet a girl and bring her back to my room. Paying for sex is very common among students; it is a normal phase that even adults now went through when they were students. If you don't experiment with your sex life as a young person, you risk experimenting as a married man and hurting your wife. Time will come for me to settle down and stick to one person once I meet the right one" - PL.

What are your views on PL's story?

"I once dated a man who was engaged to somebody else. He always told me that I understood and respected him better than she did which is why he wanted me in his life. We often went shopping together and I even got to choose things to buy for his fiancée which was actually fun. I went to their wedding, at his invitation, and I kept laughing at the thought of what everyone else would do if they knew who I really was. Our relationship ended after he moved to another town but we get back together whenever he visits, just for old times' sake" - B.

What are your views on B's story?

Does it sound like our readers are having healthy relationships? What advice would you give them? Send our readers your advice at

livetoday@cshzambia.com

Your Questions

Tell Us!
Do you have a burning question about your relationships and HIV?
Email your questions to livetoday@cshzambia.com

Here are the answers to the questions you asked.

Question: Safe Sex and Pregnancy

Hi Dr., my wife is HIV positive and I am negative. I love her so very much and want to have a baby with her. What should I do to practice safe sex?

Answer: The first step to safe sex is using a condom every time you and your wife have sex. This will allow you to maintain your HIV negative status. It is wonderful that you and your wife want to share the experience of having a baby, however, because of her HIV positive status there are certain rules to follow so that you can have an HIV negative baby. Start by going to your doctor and explaining your situation to him or her. The doctor will then prescribe your wife the necessary treatment she must follow so that you can have an HIV negative baby.

Question: Scared of HIV Testing

My girlfriend and I have never had sex before and we will only do it once we are married. For sometime now she has been suggesting that we go for VCT. I'm not ready because denial led to my cousin's death in 2004 when he was found positive. So should I go because of my girl or wait for the right time?

Answer: Going for HIV testing can be a scary thing. But staying in the unknown is even scarier because you cannot take control of your health. Even if you test positive, with careful planning you will still be able to lead a normal life with your girlfriend. Follow your girlfriend's lead and go for HIV testing together. Whatever your results, you will have each other for support and will be able to plan for your future together. The time to get tested is now!

Question: Prevention for Discordant Couples

I read in the previous issue of Live Today, that a child born from an HIV positive mother is prescribed medicine to prevent transmission of the virus. My question is, how does this medicine work? And if it prevents transmission, why can't discordant couples alternatively use it, to fully enjoy their intimacy, instead of condoms?

Answer: Nevirapine is the name of the drug given to newborns with HIV positive mothers to help prevent HIV transmission. In basic terms, the drug works by preventing the HIV virus from reproducing. However, Nevirapine cannot be used as a long term method of prevention for discordant couples for a number of reasons. Firstly, the drug can only be prescribed for a short amount of a time. Secondly, in HIV positive people, Nevirapine is only used in combination with other drugs. If used on its own it can lead to drug resistance. Therefore, your best long-term prevention method is still condoms.

Question: Masturbation

Is masturbation harmful or not? If yes, what effect does it have in our everyday life?

Answer: Masturbation is not harmful whatsoever. It is a healthy way to fulfill any sexual desires you may have, especially for people without partners or whose partners are not willing or available for sex. Some of the benefits of masturbation include avoiding pregnancy and the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases.

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Voluntary Counselling & Testing	Abstinence
Prevention of Mother to To Child Transmission	Partner reduction
Anti-Retroviral Treatment	Condom use
STI prevention & treatment	Paralegal matters
Male circumcision	Human trafficking
Stress Management	Gender-based violence
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Your Health Is In Your Hands

Pg2 Mixed-status
Couples

Pg3 Break the
Silence

Pg4 Your
Space

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Mixed-status couples

When one is positive and the other negative



Finding out that your spouse is HIV positive and you are negative does not mean your marriage or your lives should end. It is possible for discordant couples to live long lives and continue taking care of their families and loved ones." This is according to a couple that has lived with this situation for the last 19 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Mtonga of Lusaka have been married for 32 years and have 11 children together. They first discovered their status as a discordant couple 19 years ago when they went for VCT and Mr. Mtonga tested HIV positive and his wife negative.

"In 1994, we got a written invitation from Project San Francisco (now Zambia Emory HIV Research Project - ZEHRP) to go for CVCT (Couples Voluntary Counseling and Testing). My wife was interested but I was not so I refused and we never went. We got a second

invitation and finally went on 14 May, 1994 and that is when we tested and found out that I was positive and she was negative," said Mr. Mtonga.

The couple narrated how the counselor gave each of them their results in separate envelopes and how they first

read those results then exchanged envelopes with each other. To their great surprise, Mr. Mtonga was positive and Mrs. Mtonga was not.

"The initial reaction was utter disbelief; we did not think such a thing could happen so we asked the counselor how this was possible. My wife got extremely angry with me and we had a huge disagreement. I remember we even went home using different routes but once we arrived, the differences

continued."

Mrs. Mtonga also recalls how angry she was. "I was very annoyed that day, my blood pressure even shot up. At home we continued arguing angrily until eventually we started discussing the way forward and agreed to take up counseling as we had been advised at the center. That same day we sat our three eldest children down and told them the outcome of our CVCT,

they had just been wondering why their father and I were having such a heated argument in the house. After some counseling sessions, I told my parents about our situation and expected them to ask me to divorce my husband but they

at Chazanga clinic every six months. 19 years is a long time and we would not have remained discordant if we did not take all the instructions seriously and followed them well. If you do not use condoms you end up catching and spreading HIV. There is a bright future for couples that use condoms all the time and seek care and treatment. We have known couples that get tested and come out discordant and we have encouraged those who considered divorce to just stay together because it is a manageable situation if you follow instructions."

Mr. Mtonga emphasised the importance of using condoms and adhering to treatment. He said he has been on ARVs since 1995 and he collects them every three months. Apart from three TB relapses in the last 19 years, Mr. Mtonga says he has no complaints about his health. He says adhering to treatment is very possible because it is like managing any other disease.

Mrs. Mtonga further emphasised the need to know one's status.

"Going for VCT is the first step because that is the only way you will know the best lifestyle for you. It is also very important to test with your partner, it is unfortunate that some people test alone and hide their positive status from

"We use condoms correctly and consistently, this is something we take very seriously."

told me to stay with him. My family was supportive and so were the counselors from the center (now ZEHRP), they even used to follow up with us at home sometimes."

Mr. Mtonga 56 and Mrs. Mtonga 48, say they have remained discordant for such a long time because they follow all the instructions given by the counselors.

"We use condoms correctly and consistently, this is something we take very seriously. We also go for CVCT

their partner. These days it is so common for couples to be discordant and our only advice is that they should not fight or divorce because that situation has already happened. What they need to do is discuss and seek counseling then follow those instructions. Living with HIV has become such a common thing that couples easily talk about their status so there is no need for anyone to feel stigmatized and fail to disclose their status in order to seek help."



**She's not afraid
to talk about
condoms
are you?**

Have you thought about HIV?

safe love think talk act



MIXED- STATUS COUPLES



A "MIXED STATUS" RELATIONSHIP IS A SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONE HIV+ PARTNER AND ONE HIV- PARTNER.

You may also hear these terms to describe these relationships:

- ✓ SERODISCORDANT
- ✓ DISCORDANT
- ✓ SERODIVERGENT
- ✓ MAGNETIC
- ✓ HIV-POSITIVE/NEGATIVE



IF YOU ARE IN A MIXED-STATUS RELATIONSHIP AND YOU HAVE SEX, YOU CAN PROTECT AGAINST HIV BY USING CONDOMS AND DENTAL DAMS CONSISTENTLY & CORRECTLY.

PARTNERS WITH DIFFERENT HIV STATUSES

A "mixed-status couple" is one in which one partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative. This is also referred to as being a "*serodiscordant couples*." Mixed-status couples face unique challenges, particularly around sexual intimacy.

All couples, regardless of each partner's HIV status, should be aware of the need to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. But for mixed-status couples, the possibility of infection is a constant reality.

Communication Is Key

If you and your partner are a mixed-status couple, it is important that the two of you communicate with each other on a regular and ongoing basis about your intimate relations. It's possible that you or your partner may be uncomfortable with sex after learning that you have HIV. If this is the case, keep in mind that you can both enjoy hugging, kissing, and touching. These actions carry no risk for HIV infection, and will definitely make you both feel better. Some mixed-status couples may become so careful and fearful of infection that they limit or even stop sexual activity. This can have negative effects on their relationship. Your feelings or your partner's feelings about sexual activity may change with time and as you and he or she learn more about HIV and

sex. Some people find it helpful to talk things over with a professional or in a support group.

Practicing Safer Sex

If you decide to engage in sexual activity, when you and your partner have sex (anal, oral, or vaginal), you can protect against transmitting HIV and transmitting or acquiring other sexually transmitted infections by using condoms consistently and correctly. Health care providers and local HIV/AIDS organizations can be important sources of information and support for you and your partner.

Treatment As Prevention

Also, if you are HIV-positive being on antiretroviral therapy can lower the risk of transmitting HIV to your HIV-negative partner. Taking all your medications, on time, will help to lower the viral load in your body fluids and decrease the chance that you will transmit HIV to your partner. But remember, even if you have a low viral load, you can still transmit HIV to your sex partner. So it is important to always use a condom and practice safe sex.

Reference: (AIDS.gov, 2012)

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT TOGETHER

- When to disclose to your partner your HIV+ status?
- When to disclose to your partner's friends and family?
- It is difficult for the HIV+ person to overcome a certain sense of "stigma and shame"
- Some friends and family might not think it's a good idea to be with an HIV+ person.



Some couples become discordant while already in a relationship and others before entering it. In this edition we asked some of your fellow readers if they would knowingly enter a relationship with an HIV positive person.



I would not get involved with someone who has HIV because I am too afraid for my life. If I am safe why should I put myself in a situation where I may get infected? I don't want to have to worry about looking after them when they are sick. I know it may sound bad but I just don't know how I would react in a situation like that.

Janet- House maid



If the person had to tell me before we decided to get serious I would probably consider it. The fact that they decided to be truthful enough to tell me about it probably means that they care about themselves and about me as well. I would not automatically say 'no', if we love each other then I would enter in a relationship with them.

Vincent Phiri - Gardener



If she is someone who has been honest enough to tell me the situation and I love her then I can stay with her. My worry would be when it comes to having children, what would we do? I still want to have children but I also want to be safe. If there is a way to deal with that and as long as she does not cheat on me, I can definitely stay with her.

Francis Mazimba - Maintenance officer



I have been faithful all my life and would not want to get involved with someone who may infect me. Even if condoms are used, at some point when you get married you stop using them so how would that work? I am just not convinced that condoms are enough protection in such a situation, my life would be at risk. I am negative and I would like to stay that way.

Kenedzia Kakusa - Sales Person

• • • • •
 • All relationships
 • come with their own
 • responsibilities.
 • Entering into a
 • relationship with an
 • HIV positive person is
 • no different, there will
 • be highs and there will
 • be lows. The important
 • thing to remember
 • is to continuously
 • communicate about
 • any concerns you have
 • with your partner and
 • to come to solutions
 • together. Agree on how
 • you can maintain your
 • status as HIV negative
 • in a way that makes
 • you feel safe and your
 • partner appreciated and
 • not stigmatized. As
 • we've learned from Mr.
 • and Mrs. Mtonga, HIV
 • can be managed like
 • any other disease and
 • you can have a healthy
 • relationship both
 • mentally and physically
 • as a discordant couple.
 • • • • •

YOUR SPACE

Where your stories and opinions get heard.

YOU TOLD US

In the last edition, we asked for your opinion on the relationships three of your fellow readers were in. Here are some of your views.

KZ, I do not think it is true when you say you and your married boyfriend love each other very much. If he loves you, why is he with another girl besides yourself? You know that it is a man who goes after a woman so the fact that he went after the girl he is now married to shows he loved her a lot as well. I wish I knew how old you are because you might just be wasting your time while there are single guys who would want to marry you.

Jerries Rundale Jnr

KZ, can you just listen to yourself? He is a married man and you need to leave him and his family alone. If he loves you as you claim, he would not have left you and made another girl pregnant in the first place. You cannot say he was forced to marry her because like we say in Bemba umukoshi wamulwele ulya eco utemenwe, if he had not wanted to, he wouldn't have. He married her because she is the one he loved, not you so learn to let go.

FLY G

PL, you need to have just one sexual partner. Stop paying different girls for sex because that is too risky, you should instead find one girlfriend who you can experiment different things with. It is good that you want to complete your studies but please stop engaging in casual sex.

Does it sound like our readers are having healthy relationships? What advice would you give them? Send our readers your advice at

livetoday@cshzambia.com



Your Questions

Here are the answers to the questions you asked.

Question: I don't have the courage to face a counselor because I feel every question they can ask me I have already asked myself and I have failed to answer. How can I do it?

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