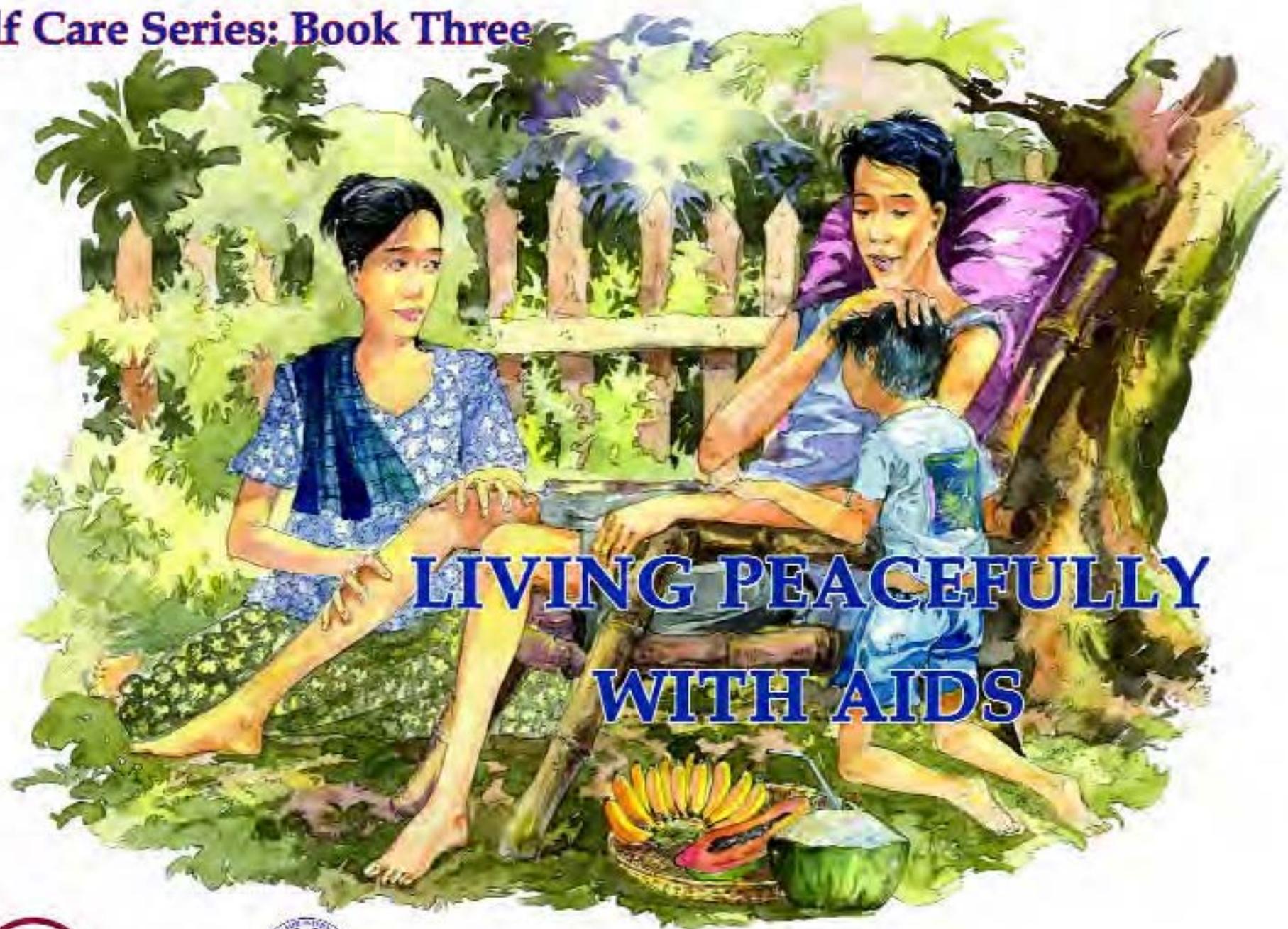


Self Care Series: Book Three



**LIVING PEACEFULLY
WITH AIDS**

Self Care Series: Book Three

LIVING PEACEFULLY

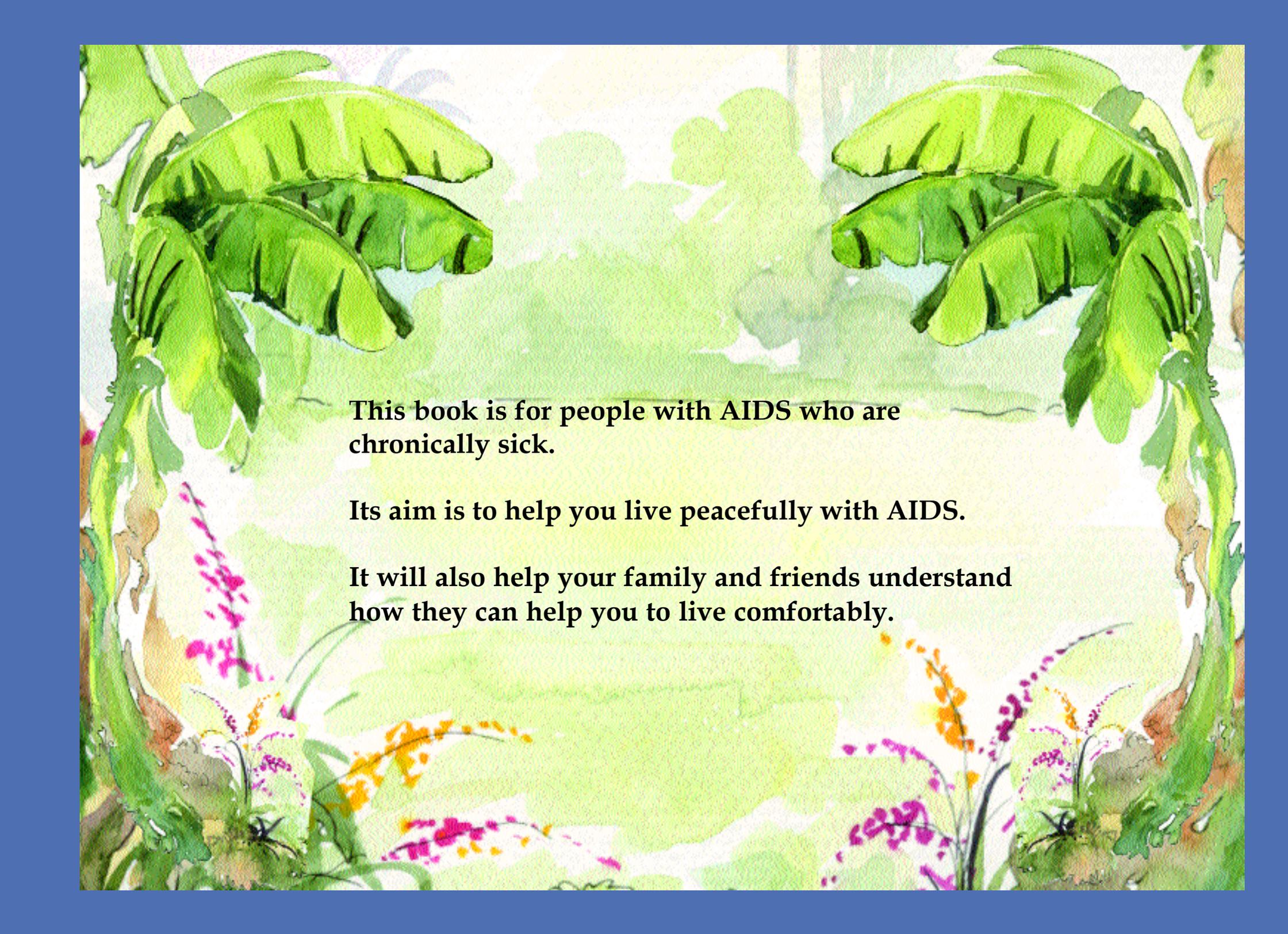
WITH

AIDS

For people living with AIDS who are chronically sick



Funded by The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Through the IMPACT Project
Implemented by Family Health International
Cooperative Agreement HRN-A-00-97-00017-00

A watercolor illustration of a tropical scene. Two palm trees with large, green, fan-shaped fronds are positioned on the left and right sides. The background is a soft, light green wash. In the foreground, there are several colorful flowers, including purple and orange ones, with green foliage. The overall style is soft and artistic.

This book is for people with AIDS who are chronically sick.

Its aim is to help you live peacefully with AIDS.

It will also help your family and friends understand how they can help you to live comfortably.

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HOW CAN I BE PEACEFUL?

- **Be kind to yourself**
Have kindness for yourself. Wish happiness and freedom from suffering for yourself.
- **Understand your feelings**
Sadness, anger and hopelessness are normal feelings when you are sick. They will come and go.
- **Plan for the future**
You will find peace in being prepared for the future.



Accept your illness.
You have a chronic disease which will cause you to become sick. But it is possible to overcome difficulties and to enjoy each day as precious.



We can meditate like this:

“May I be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be free from anger. May I be free from suffering.”

A quote from Buddhist teaching by Venerable Maha Ghosananda

EXTRA INFORMATION

Other things that may help you to feel peaceful:

Plan how you would like to live your daily life

Decide where you would like to stay and who you would like to help take care of you.
Discuss this with the people concerned.

Discuss your feelings and worries with people you feel close to

It is often a big relief to people close to you when you can speak together about how you feel.
Often just talking to family and friends about your illness will help you feel better.

Try walking or lying meditation to help you feel peaceful

Walk slowly or lie down comfortably. Say the following to yourself:

“Breathing in, I know I’m breathing in.
Breathing out, I know I’m breathing out.
As my in breath grows deep,
My out breath grows slow.
Breathing in I calm my body.
Breathing out I feel at ease.
Breathing in, I smile.
Breathing out, I release.
Dwelling in the present moment.
I know this is a wonderful moment.”

HOW CAN I COPE WITH STRESS AND WORRY?

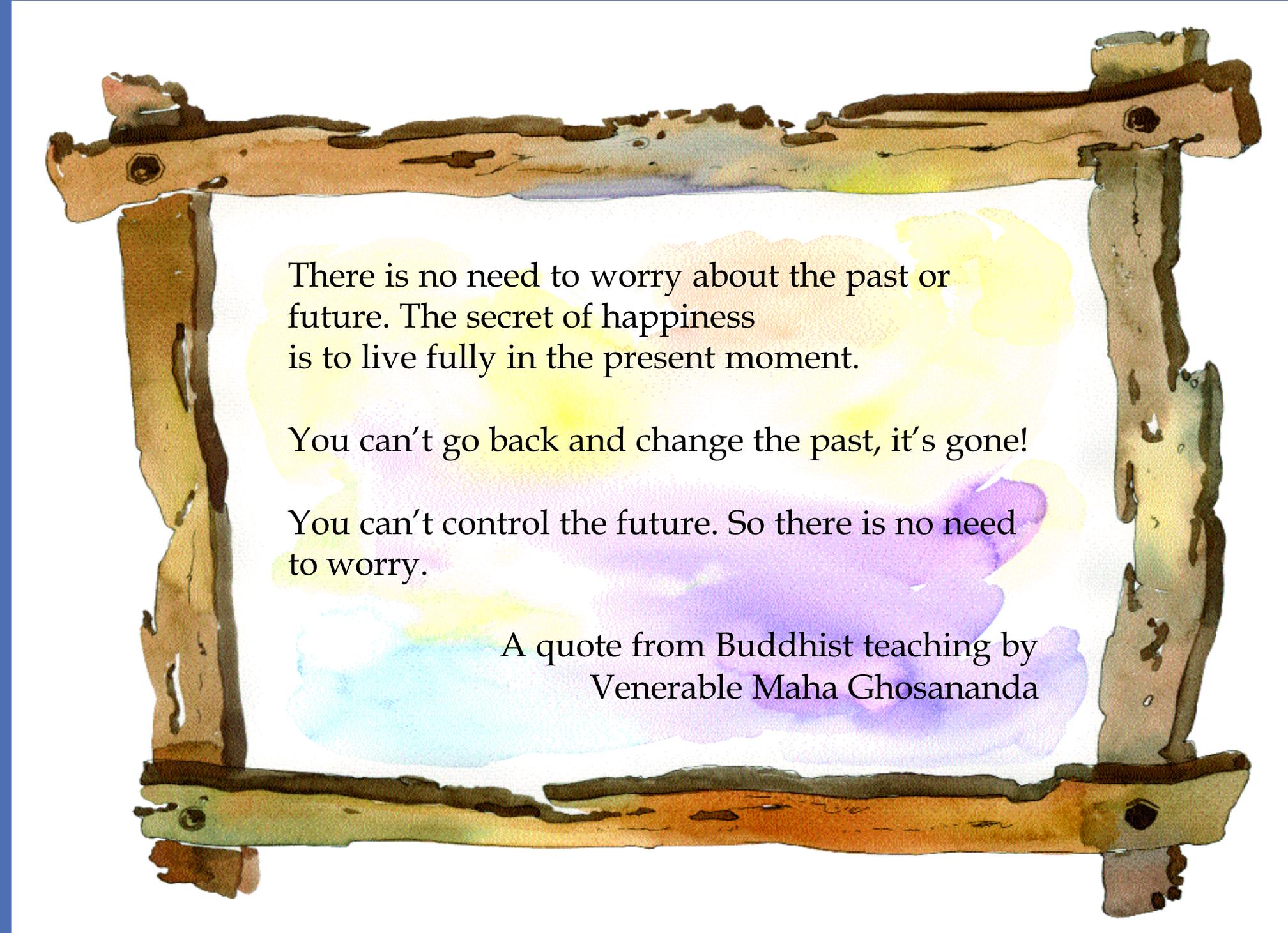
“Dying is not the problem. Our problem is how to continue living while we’re still alive.”
(Person living with AIDS)

What can I do to help myself feel better?

1. Seek treatment for illness from a qualified person.
2. Refresh and relax your body by resting when necessary. Do gentle exercise such as slow walking, meditation or other things you enjoy.
3. Care for your mind and spirit by:
 - Staying hopeful that you will be able to manage your illness and will soon feel better.
 - Talking about your fears and worries with people you trust.
 - Seeking spiritual help and prayer according to your beliefs.



When you have AIDS, you will have periods of ill health, sickness and despair. But you will also sometimes feel well and experience precious moments.



There is no need to worry about the past or future. The secret of happiness is to live fully in the present moment.

You can't go back and change the past, it's gone!

You can't control the future. So there is no need to worry.

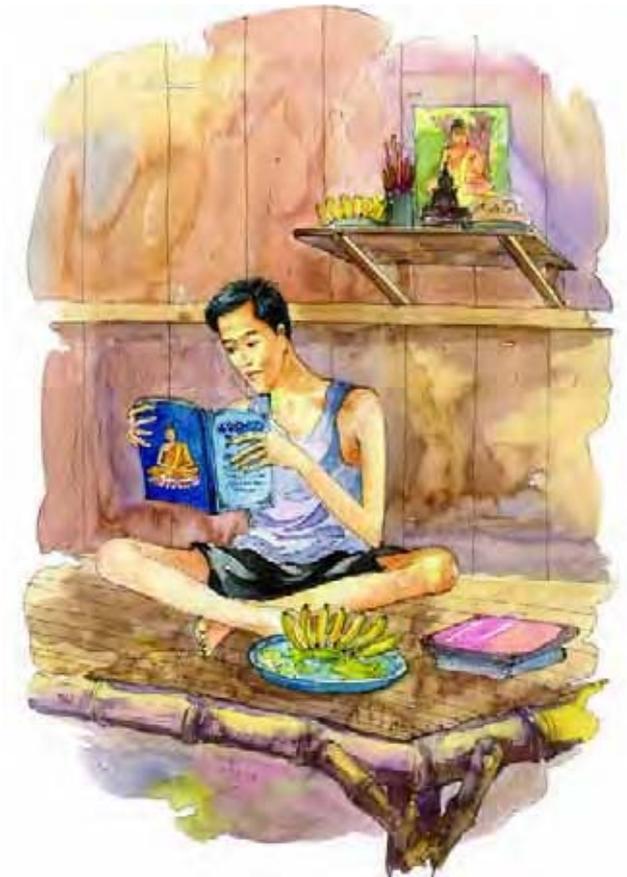
A quote from Buddhist teaching by
Venerable Maha Ghosananda

HOW CAN I CARE FOR THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF MY LIFE?

Just as your body needs nourishment to sustain it, so does your spirit.

To nourish your spirit:

- Seek help from people in your community who have experience of working with the spiritual aspects of life. They may be monks, nuns, elders at the temple or other people, depending on your beliefs.
- Spend time in peaceful places and surroundings.
- Spend time with people you love such as children and friends. Share happy memories.
- Show people close to you that you love them, even if you have not done this in the past.
- Talk about your worries and fears and express your hopes for the future.



Follow rituals and ceremonies that bring you comfort such as chanting, praying, lighting incense and candles, making offerings, meditating or receiving blessings.

EXTRA INFORMATION

There is deep suffering associated with AIDS. This suffering affects not only your body but also your mind and spirit. It also affects your family and all the people who love you.

Spiritual care can help you to:

- Accept, value and love yourself.
- Be peaceful and understanding.
- Maintain hope. Everyone needs hope. For example you may hope to:
 - * Get better or hope for happy times with your family and friends.
 - * Hope for your family's future.
 - * Hope for a peaceful death.
- Reconcile with people who you may have had conflict with in the past.
- Understand suffering and how suffering can be turned into a positive experience.

REMEMBER

AIDS is only one part of your life and only one of many challenges that you have faced.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE?

Practical things to think about and discuss with your family

- Where do you want to be cared for when you are very sick?
- Who is the best person to care for your children?
- Who will be responsible for your possessions? Who can you talk to about this?
- How will your family manage when you die? Who can help them?
- How will your family pay for your funeral? What kind of ceremony would you like to have?

Emotional issues to be discussed may include:

Unresolved old quarrels

- Is there anyone you would like to reconcile with?
- How will you do this?
- Who can help you?



It is better to plan for the future when you are feeling well. Even though you may live for many more months or years you will find peace in being prepared.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Things to consider about your children's future:

- Who do you trust?
- Who will love and care for your children the way you would want?
- Is this person in a financial position to take care of and provide an education for your children?
- Is this person healthy and strong?
- Are they likely to be sick in the future?
- How might your children feel about living with this person?

Other things you may like to do to prepare yourself for the future:

- Tell or show family members or friends that they are loved.
- Share your hopes for the future, especially for children who are left behind.
- Share memories of happy moments in your life. Discuss how you would like to be remembered.
- Leave things that are important to you to people you love, e.g. give favorite photographs to your children.

HOW CAN I CARE FOR MYSELF ?

Care for your skin

- If your skin is dry, do not use soap for bathing.
- Use moisturizing cream to keep your skin soft.
- Wear long sleeves to prevent insect bites.
- Keep wounds clean and covered.
- Use a mosquito net when you sleep to prevent bites.
- Treat skin infections early.

Do some light exercises

When you are lying down for a long time, your arms and legs become sore and stiff.

- Gently move your arms and legs often when you are in bed.
- Change your position often, so that your skin will not become sore.



Keep your body fresh and clean, shower regularly, and wear clean clothes.

Keep your finger and toe-nails short and clean.

Wash your hands after the toilet and before eating.

Brush your teeth regularly.

WHAT CAN I DO WHEN I DO NOT FEEL LIKE EATING?

- Choose foods that you enjoy eating.
- Eat small frequent meals.
- If you have a sore mouth or difficulty swallowing, eat soft, non-spicy foods. Mash foods or make into a soup. Use a straw to drink liquids.



Share meal times with family and friends.



On days you do not feel like eating:

- Drink nourishing energy-giving fluids such as soya bean milk, coconut juice, or sugar cane juice if available.
- Drink plenty of water.

EXTRA INFORMATION

- If you have chronic diarrhea, eat soft mashed food and avoid irritating foods such as raw vegetables or pepper.
- You can take multi-vitamins or Vitamin B complex to help stimulate your appetite.

Traditional remedies for a poor appetite

Tinospora Borapet (crispa)

- Grind the stems of the plant until powder. Mix with water and drink.

HOW DO I CARE FOR A SORE MOUTH OR THROAT?

Thrush is common in HIV+ people. It looks like a white coating on the tongue and in the mouth. Thrush usually begins in the mouth but can also go down the throat. Treat it quickly to stay healthy.



To treat thrush :

Clean the mouth and tongue often with a soft toothbrush. Rinse with salt and water solution. Eat 2 cloves of garlic every 4 hours or suck lemon twice a day.

Mouth ulcers are also common.

They mainly occur on the lips but can also be on the gums, tongue or roof of the mouth:

- Take paracetamol for pain relief.
- Clean the mouth and tongue regularly with a soft brush.

Other things that might help:

- Suck ice or drink cold drinks to numb the pain. Drink plenty of water.
- Eat soft foods. Avoid sweet foods, they increase soreness and encourage thrush to grow.
- Drink through a straw to help avoid pain when drinking.

Seek treatment from health center staff if you:

- Are unable to swallow food or water.
- Have a severe sore throat.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Drugs to treat thrush include:

- Gentian violet – put on your tongue and mouth 2 times a day.
- Nystatin ovules or tablets – suck 2 times a day.
- Ketoconazole, fluconazole & other anti-fungal tablets or lozenges.

Taking antibiotics can make thrush worse. Do not take them unless advised by medical staff.

Traditional remedies for sore throat

Phallantus chambeebitter (Urinaria)

- Ground until powder and mix with salt. Apply to the inside of mouth.

Chinese date, jujube (Zizyphus mauritiana)

- Take the skin of the fruit and boil in water until it is soft. Take this soft pulp and suck slowly in the mouth.

HOW CAN I COPE WITH NAUSEA AND VOMITING?

Sometimes nausea and vomiting pass in a short time. But sometimes they may last for several days.

What to do :

- Avoid smells or food that make you feel nauseated.
- Start eating with dry plain food such as plain white rice.
- Suck ice in small amounts. You may need to force yourself to do this. It is important to replace the fluid you have lost.
- Clean your mouth frequently by rinsing with water and a small amount of added salt.

Seek advice from a qualified health worker if:

- Vomiting is frequent and you cannot keep fluids down.
- Vomiting lasts more than 24 hours.
- There is fever with vomiting.
- The vomit contains blood.



If vomiting is severe, do not eat or drink for 1 or 2 hours. Gradually start drinking cool but not cold water, ORS, weak tea or other clear liquids.

Note: Vomit can be cleaned without fear of HIV as the HIV virus is not present in vomitus.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Some medicines, infections, stomach or intestinal problems can cause nausea and vomiting.

Drugs that may help nausea

- Prochlorperazine is useful for mild nausea.
- Metoclopramide or ginger is useful for nausea from gastro-intestinal upset.
- Cannabis (marijuana) has been found helpful for relief of nausea and improvement of appetite.

Traditional remedies for nausea and vomiting

Zingiber ginger (officinale)

- Boil a fresh or dried ginger plant in water and drink, or pound the ginger into a powder and mix with warm water and drink. For nausea, drink 1 glass of ginger 3 times per day.

Piper-lotot

- Take the whole plant including the flowers and put in the hot sun until dry. When dry, boil with water and drink.

HOW CAN I RELIEVE PAIN AND FEEL COMFORTABLE?

- Try to find reasons for the pain.
- Ask a qualified medical person to treat any infections.
- Find out what increases or relieves pain. Use the method that is best for you.
- Learn deep and regular breathing exercises to help you relax.
- Applying 'tiger balm' to painful areas may help.

Seek immediate medical help if:

- The pain becomes very bad.
- You have a headache lasting over 2 weeks.
- You have a severe headache which is getting worse and is not relieved by the usual methods of pain relief.
- You have a headache which is accompanied by vomiting or confusion.



Listen to favorite music, watch TV, read aloud or tell stories to distract your mind from the pain.

WHAT MEDICINES CAN HELP RELIEVE PAIN?



The following medicines can help relieve pain:

- Paracetamol 500mgs.

Take 1-2 tablets at least every 8 hours. If you have strong pain, it can be taken every 4 to 6 hours. Some people take the pain medicine regularly, for example 3 times per day.

- Aspirin 300mgs -500mgs.

Aspirin is useful to reduce pain, lower fever and reduce inflammation. It may also help to calm a cough and reduce itching skin. Take aspirin every 8 hours. Take it at meal times to avoid stomach upset.

Important:

Aspirin is only for adults. Do not give aspirin to children. Do not take aspirin if you have a history of heart burn, stomach ulcer or indigestion.

If paracetamol and aspirin do not help the pain, seek a medical person's advice.

Do not buy stronger pain killers or drugs without consulting with a medical person. A qualified person will look for the cause of the pain and treat the cause if this is possible. They will refer you to a hospital for treatment of severe pain.

EXTRA INFORMATION

What stronger medicines are available for pain?

Some stronger drugs are:

1. Codeine tablets.
2. Ibuprofen tablets.

- If the pain comes and goes, take codeine as soon as the pain starts.
- If the pain is constant or frequent, take codeine at least 3 times a day.
- If you cannot sleep well at night, you can take codeine at bedtime.

If the pain is very strong you can take codeine every 4 hours.

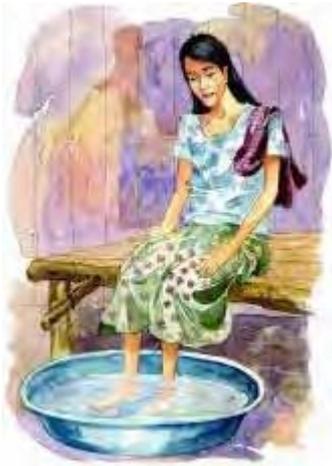
For severe pain, try alternating ibuprofen or paracetamol with the codeine, e.g. follow the schedule below.

- Take ibuprofen at 06:00, 14:00, & bedtime (every 8 hours)
- Take codeine at 08:00, 12:00, 16:00 & bedtime (4 times a day)

HOW TO TREAT SPECIFIC PAIN

Hand and Foot Pain

Strong burning pain in the hands and feet may be due to a nerve problem. This type of pain is made worse by very hot or very cold temperature. Touch and even clothes that touch your hands and feet can be painful.



How to relieve hand and foot pain:

Put your hands or feet in water until they feel better. Plan all activities such as moving and bathing, etc., to be done at the same time. Then you can have longer periods of rest. Lying on a soft blanket may also help.



How to reduce swelling of legs or other parts of the body:

Raise the swollen limb on a pillow or cushion. Raise the bottom of the bed to be higher than the head of the bed.



How to relieve headaches:

Give a gentle head massage. Apply tiger balm or put a cool cloth on your forehead. Lie in a darkened room until the headache feels better.

EXTRA INFORMATION

How to relieve painful joints

Gently massage affected joints. Apply tiger balm to painful areas. Soak a “krama” or towel in warm water and wrap around affected joints, reapply when cloth is cool. Traditional remedies for joint pain may be also effective.

What causes pain in a person who has AIDS ?

There are many causes of pain in a person living with AIDS. It is important to try to find the cause of the pain.

Some causes of pain

- Infections such as herpes zoster.
- Lying down for a long time.
- Swelling of the legs caused by poor circulation.
- Worry about discrimination, about the future, about children and family can also cause pain.

Emotional Pain

Emotional pain can hurt as much as physical pain. Examples of emotional pain are fear of dying, a feeling of guilt and feeling life is not worth living.

Fear makes pain worse. Both cause the body to stiffen and contract. When someone in pain is also afraid, the pain hurts more. Anything that relieves fear will also decrease pain.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Traditional remedies for pain

Headache

1. Mix fresh leaves of a 'Pomelo (*Citrus grandis*)' fruit with leaves from any other tree or plant. Boil in water and use the boiled mixture as a steam inhalation.
2. Take the whole plant of 'Mint (*Mintus arvenis*)' except the roots and spread out in a shady area to dry. Then mix with boiling water and use as a steam inhalation.
3. Take the big roots of 'Kaempferia galanga' and clean well. Leave in the sun until they are completely dry, then boil for 30 minutes with water and drink.

Skin abscess

1. Pound the stalk of the 'Leek plant (*Allium fistulosum*)' until fine. Then take and place as a compress over the area with the abscess.
2. Take the plant of 'Scoparia dulcis' either dry or fresh and boil with water and drink.

Stomach pain

1. Dry 'Turmeric (*Curcuma domestica*)' leaves or roots and pound until they become a powder. Mix one small spoon of powder with a glass of water and drink twice per day.
2. Dry the fruit of 'Star Anise (*Illicium verum*)' and pound to a powder, mix with water and drink.

HOW CAN I MANAGE SKIN PROBLEMS?

Skin problems are common with AIDS. You can control them with the right care and treatment.



How to prevent bed sores

(Bed sores are caused by pressure from lying in the same position for a long time.)

- Keep the skin clean and dry.
- Get out of bed as much as possible, even if only to sit in a chair for a few minutes.
- Change your position at least every 2 hours while lying down.
- Use soft blankets and a soft sheet or blanket to lie on (these should be hung in the sun every day and changed every time they become wet or soiled).
- Use cushions to support bony parts of the body to prevent rubbing.

Caring for painful rash/small blisters

- Keep the area dry and do not let clothes rub on it.
- Wear clean loose fitting clothes.
- Relieve pain with aspirin or paracetamol.
- Prevent infection by bathing sores with clean salt water 3-4 times per day and apply gentian violet once per day.
- Apply calamine lotion to the skin to treat itching.

HOW TO TREAT SCABIES

Treat scabies as soon as possible.

If one member of the family has scabies, the whole family should be treated.

- Wash the whole body with soap and water.
- Apply Benzyl Benzoate from the neck down to the toes. Do not put on face. Leave on the body overnight. Wear clean clothes.
- Next morning do not shower. Reapply Benzyl Benzoate from neck to toes.
- In the evening apply Benzyl Benzoate from neck to toes.
- On the second morning take a bath and wear clean clothes.
- Wash the used clothes, bed sheets and blankets with soap and water and let them dry in the hot sun. This will kill the scabies insects.



Medicine to treat scabies

EXTRA INFORMATION

How to care for wounds (including open sores and ulcers) which are not infected

- Always cover your hand with a plastic glove or wear a plastic bag when you clean a wound. When you clean a wound avoid contact with blood. Always wash hands before and after completing any wound care.
- Wash the affected area with a clean cloth (or cotton wool or a compress if available) and clean with water that has been boiled, cooled and mixed with a little salt (1 teaspoon of salt to 1 liter of clean water).
- Protect the wound by covering with clean gauze bandages or a clean freshly washed cloth wrapped loosely.

How to care for infected wounds with pus

- Clean off the pus with clean water mixed with salt. Wash around the edge of the wound. Then clean the center and finally out to the edges. Use separate small pieces of clean cloth for each wipe.

Note: Burn or bury all waste materials such as soiled dressing clothes/compresses. These used materials could infect other people.

HOW TO CARE FOR BOILS AND ABSCESSSES

Boils and abscesses are red painful lumps on the skin. They are common on the groin, armpits, buttocks, back and upper legs.

At the first sign of boils, apply hot compresses for 20 minutes per day to help the boil or abscess come to the surface quickly. Drain the pus regularly.



How to make a hot compress

- Boil water with 1 teaspoon of salt to every liter of water.
- Allow water to cool until you can just hold your hand in it.
- Fold a clean cloth that is bigger than the area you are going to apply it to.
- Soak the cloth in the warm water and squeeze out the excess water.
- Put the cloth on the affected area of skin.
- Place a plastic sheet or a plastic bag over the cloth.
- Keep the affected part raised if possible.
- When the cloth begins to cool, put it back in the warm water.
- Repeat the process.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Traditional remedies for skin problems

For herpes zoster

Borapet (*Zizyphus mauritiana*)

- Pound fresh leaves until fine, apply to the painful area of the skin.

For skin blisters

Black pepper (*Piper nigrum*)

- Take dry black pepper seeds and chew until pulp, apply to the blisters.

For itchy skin

Candle bush (*Cassia alata*)

- Take the fresh leaves of the candle bush plant, pound until fine, and apply to the affected area.

Wild bitter melon (*Monordica charantia*)

- Take unripe and use like a boiled vegetable to eat or use the boiled water to wash the itchy skin.

SAFETY FOR CAREGIVERS AT HOME

HIV/AIDS is not spread by normal social contact.

There is no risk of people in your home acquiring HIV/AIDS if you follow certain simple rules.



Those providing home care should:

Wash hands with soap and water after they change dirty bed linen and clothes, and also after having contact with any body fluids.

Keep their own wounds covered. Both carers and people living with AIDS should cover any open wounds.

If the blood from an HIV infected person is spilt, it should be immediately cleaned with a disinfectant such as bleach (1% solution). If rubber gloves are not available then cover hands with paper or plastic bags. Clean hands afterwards with soap and water.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Safety for care givers

To clean clothing or bedding that has been soiled with blood, diarrhea or other body fluids:

- Keep them separate from other household washing.
- Hold an unstained piece of the washing and rinse off the blood or diarrhea.
- Soak in bleach for 20 minutes.
- Then wash in soapy water and hang in the sun to dry.

Avoid sharing toothbrushes, razors or anything else that can cut or come into contact with blood.

HOW CAN I MANAGE FEVER?

Lower the fever by cooling the skin



Cool the skin by:

- Removing any unnecessary clothes and blankets.
- Taking showers.
- Putting cloths soaked in cool (not cold) water on the chest and forehead.
- Wiping the skin with a wet cloth and letting the water dry off by itself.
- Drinking plenty of water, weak tea, fruit juice or watery soup.
- Taking paracetamol to reduce fever.

Seek treatment from health center staff or a qualified practitioner if:

- Fever has not reduced after 3 days.
- There is coughing and weight loss with the fever.
- Fever is accompanied by a dry mouth, severe headache, stiff neck, convulsions, vomiting or diarrhea.

EXTRA INFORMATION

In people living with AIDS, fever often comes and goes. It is difficult to know if fever is a symptom of an infection or whether it is due to HIV infection itself.

Causes of fever can include:

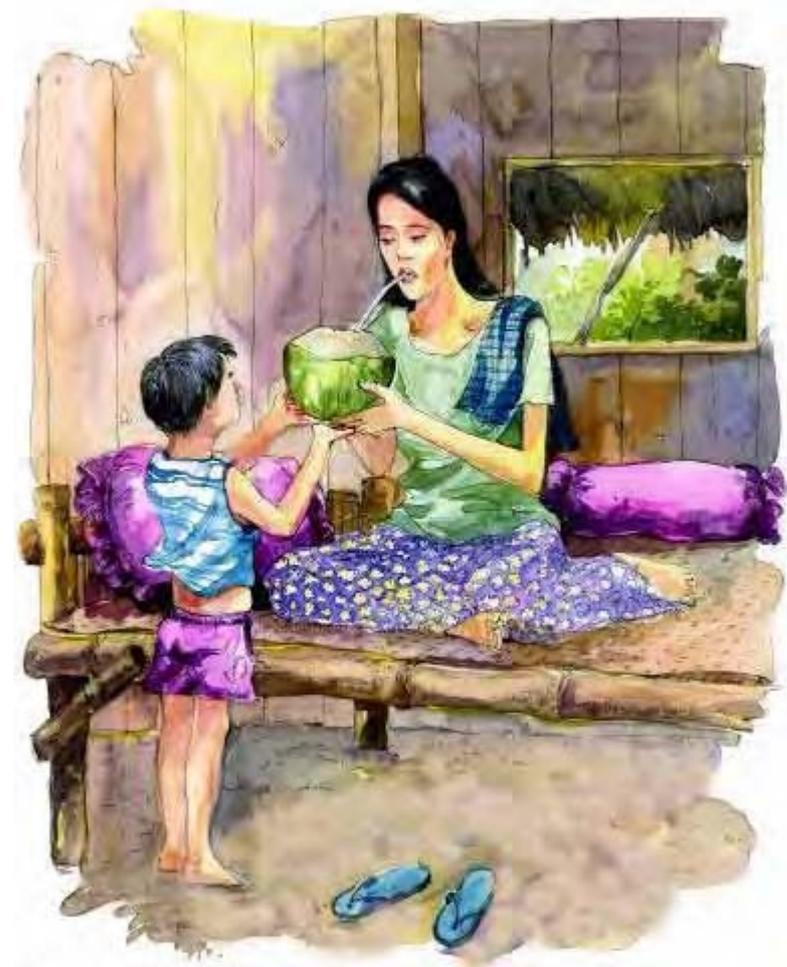
- AIDS related infections such as TB
- Malaria
- HIV infection itself

WHAT CAN I DO WHEN I FEEL TIRED AND WEAK?

AIDS can often make a person feel very tired and weak, particularly in the later stages of the illness. Ask a medical person to check for infections or other problems.

What to do:

- Rest as much as possible.
- Ask for help with tasks you cannot manage.
- Find ways to make things easier for yourself, e.g., take a shower sitting down, keep all the things you need close to you.
- Take vitamins and iron if you are unable to eat well.
- Eat frequent small meals or snacks instead of trying to eat large meals.



If you cannot eat, try to drink soya bean milk or other nourishing drinks such as sugar cane juice or coconut water.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Some possible causes of weakness and tiredness

- HIV infection or other infections, particularly chest infection
- Poor nutrition
- Depression
- Anemia (not enough red blood cells in the blood)

Avoid bed sores

If you are confined to bed because of weakness, make sure that you change your position regularly to prevent stiffness and also bed sores. Ask family members or carers to massage your back, knees, elbows and other bony areas regularly to help your circulation. Ask for help to change your position when needed.

HOW CAN I SLEEP WELL?

Sleep is very important to refresh both the mind and body. Problems sleeping are common in people with AIDS.

Some causes:

- Lack of physical activity during the day
- Worry/depression
- Pain

What to do to ensure a good night sleep:

- Ask a qualified medical person to treat any infections that cause pain or discomfort.
- Do light exercise such as slow walking.
- Relax with friends and family. Watch the TV or listen to the radio.
- Ask family or friends to do gentle body massage.



Try meditation or breathing exercises to relax.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Traditional medicines to help sleeping

Sacred Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifer*)

- Take the leaves and stems of the lotus and boil in water. Drink the boiled water.

Traditional medicine for loss of energy and tiredness

Chinese date, jujube (*Zizyphus mauritiana*)

- Take unripe fruit, boil in water and drink.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR DIARRHEA?

Diarrhea can be caused by an infection from dirty food or water, stress and worry, or by the body's weakened protective system.

Diarrhea is more than 3 loose stools in 1 day.

When diarrhea starts:

- Drink plenty of liquids. ORS, coconut juice, tea and water are all good.
- Eat soft cooked food such as babor (rice soup).
- If you have stomach cramps, put a bottle of warm water wrapped in a "krama" or a towel on your stomach.
- After each episode of diarrhea wash and dry the rectal area gently.
- Wash hands with soap and water after going to the toilet.

Seek treatment from the health center or other trained person if:

- Diarrhea does not improve.
- There is fever with diarrhea.
- There is blood or mucous in the diarrhea.
- There is vomiting, weakness and loss of appetite.
- There is severe abdominal pain.



Drink plenty of liquids. ORS, coconut juice, tea and water are all good.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Treatment of diarrhea

It is important to use the right dose of the right medicine for the correct number of days as advised by a qualified medical person. The drugs the government guidelines use to treat diarrhea are cotrimoxazole, norfloxacin and metronidazole.

HIV can cause chronic, persistent diarrhea.

If the diarrhea continues after other correct treatment, you can take constipating drugs to control the diarrhea. These drugs include loperamide and smecta. They do not cure the cause of diarrhea.

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Traditional medicine for diarrhea

Guava (*Psidium guajava*)

- Take unripe fruit, or 15 - 20 leaves of guava and boil in water, then mix with ginger and drink.

Milk Fruit

- Take the skin or leaves of the milk fruit and put in the sun until dry, then boil in water and drink.

Pomegranate stems

- Take the pomegranate shoots and chew, discard after chewing, follow by drinking boiled water.

HOW CAN I MANAGE CONSTIPATION?

Constipation can result from prolonged bed rest, poor diet, or from some drugs, such as codeine.

Treatment:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Try to do light daily exercise like walking.

Laxatives can be used to help have a normal stool movement if the above measures do not work.



Eat fruits such as ripe papaya that will help soften the stool.

HOW CAN I MANAGE A COUGH AND OTHER RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS?

Respiratory problems are common in people with AIDS.

Things that may help:

- Keep active by walking around, turning in bed and sitting up. This helps to encourage the lungs to drain.
- During the day take deep breaths and cough to clear the lungs. Even though this may be uncomfortable, it is important to do this at least 4 times a day
- Drink lots of water. It will help to loosen the mucus.

When to seek medical help for respiratory problems:

- If a sudden high fever develops with the cough.
- You have blood in your sputum.
- Your sputum changes color from clear to grey, yellow or green.
- You have sudden and rapid difficulties breathing.
- You have severe pain in the chest.
- You have a cough for more than 3 weeks.



Sitting up makes it easier to breathe.

WHAT SHOULD I DO FOR A CHRONIC COUGH?

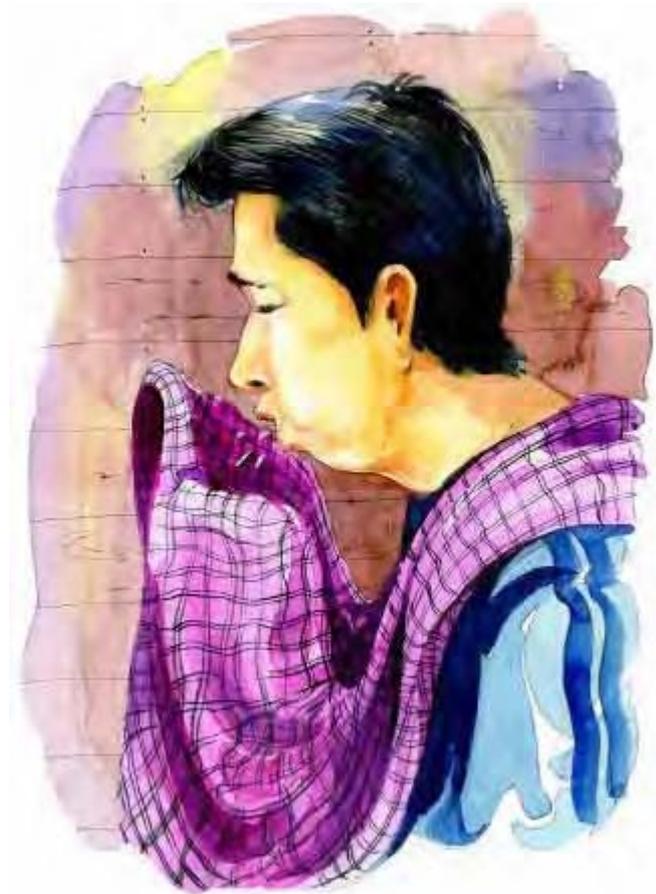
Seek treatment at the health center or hospital if you have some of the signs and symptoms below:

- A cough lasting more than 3 weeks
- Weight loss
- Sweating at night
- Feeling very weak
- Sputum with blood
- Severe abdominal pain with distention can mean abdominal TB.
- Large lymph nodes in the neck can be TB.

TB treatment always uses more than 1 medicine and takes months to cure. Treatment for TB is free.

Important:
Treating TB incorrectly is dangerous to you and to others. You must complete the full treatment as advised by the health staff.

(ALWAYS COVER YOUR MOUTH WHEN COUGHING. DO NOT SPIT SPUTUM ONTO THE FLOOR.)



If your cough lasts for more than 3 weeks, it may mean you have Tuberculosis (TB). Tuberculosis is a common infection if you have AIDS. If you have TB, it can be treated.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Symptoms of a respiratory problem are:

- A chronic cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Increased amount of sputum

Possible causes of respiratory problems are:

- Colds and flu
- Bronchitis
- Pneumonia – caused by bacteria or fungus
- Tuberculosis

Other things that might help respiratory problems:

- Gentle patting on the back may help to move the sputum and make it easier to cough up.
- If pain is felt in the chest when coughing, support the chest with a pillow when coughing.
- Breathe hot water vapors (sit with your head covered over a bowl of hot water and breathe in the steam for 15 minutes. Repeat this several times a day. Traditional herbs or eucalyptus may be added to the water.

EXTRA INFORMATION

How can I relieve an irritating cough?

- Sip warm tea. Add sugar, honey or lemon juice if available.
- Try traditional remedies.
- Do not use cough syrups during the day. They should only be used at night to help sleep.
- Cough regularly to move the sputum out of the lungs.

What can I do for pain in the chest?

Pain in the chest and difficulty breathing are common problems in people with AIDS.

Very often the cause is not known.

- Applying a warm compress to the area that is painful may help.
- If the pain persists seek help from a qualified medical person.

How to relieve difficulty in breathing:

- Lie with pillows under the head or raise the head of the bed on blocks to make it easier to breathe.
- Sit in a chair leaning forward with the elbows on the knees, or lean on a low table.
- Have one of your family or friends stay with you to comfort and help.

Traditional remedies for a cough

Rosary Pea (*Abrus precatorius*)

- Take the roots and fresh leaves, dry in the sun, then boil with water and drink.

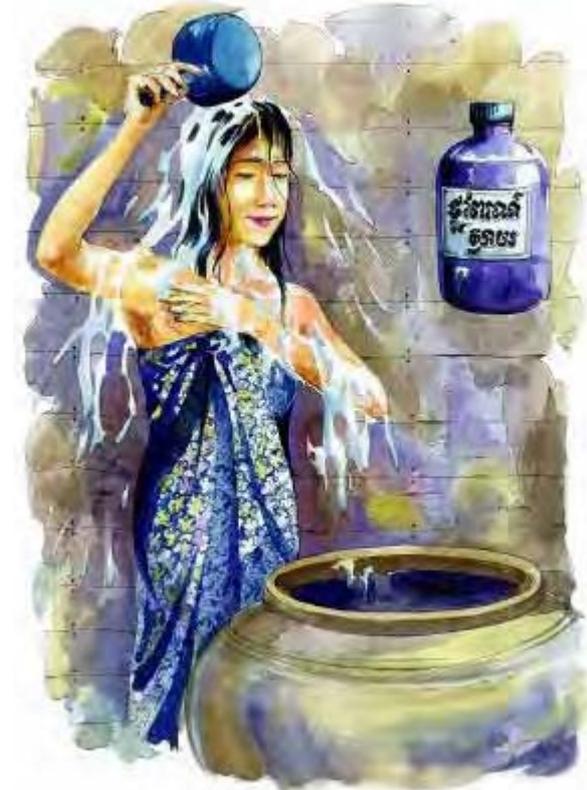
If you have a cough or difficulty breathing avoid smoking or staying in a place where other people are smoking.

HOW CAN I MANAGE GENITAL PROBLEMS?

Thrush infection

In women, this fungal infection produces a thick white curd discharge that is very itchy. It also causes redness and soreness of the vulva. In men, thrush infection affects the foreskin and the area underneath it becomes very sore and red. The skin of the penis, anus, and scrotum may also become sore and itchy.

The penis can be soaked in a salt and water solution. Dissolve a teaspoon of salt in a glass of water. Pull back the foreskin, put the penis in the water and soak for 5 minutes, repeat 2-3 times per day. If this does not work, carry out the same procedure using gentian violet instead of salt solution.



If there is signs of infection (redness, pus or swelling) seek help from a qualified medical person.

How to manage thrush:

- Apply gentian violet to the vulva and vaginal area, or to the affected male parts.
- To prepare gentian violet solution, dissolve 1 or 2 teaspoons in 1 liter of clean water.
- Apply gentian violet once daily for 3 days to the affected area using a piece of cotton wool or cloth soaked in the gentian violet solution.

EXTRA INFORMATION

Genital warts

Genital warts often spread more quickly with AIDS. If they are rubbed by clothing, they may become sore and infected and may bleed. Seek treatment from a qualified medical person when the warts are small.

Herpes

Herpes is a virus that causes painful blisters around the mouth or genital area. This problem starts as blisters which break down and give painful ulcers which heal slowly by themselves. In people with AIDS, the blisters appear more frequently and may spread over a wider area. They are sometimes difficult to treat.

How to manage herpes

Wash the affected area with a salt solution. Mix 1 teaspoon of salt with 1 litre of clean water. Wash every 2 to 3 hours if possible. Between washing, keep the affected area dry. Apply calamine lotion.

The story of Krishna Kotami

When Krishna Gotami's first child was one year old, it fell ill and died. Grief stricken and clutching its little body, she roamed the streets begging anyone who could to give her medicine to restore her child's life. Some ignored her, some laughed, and some thought she was mad. Finally she met a wise man who told her the Buddha was the only person who could perform such a miracle.

So she went to the Buddha and laid her child at his feet. The Buddha listened with infinite compassion. Then he said gently,

"There is only one way to heal your affliction. Go down to the city and bring me back a mustard seed from any house where there has never been a death."

Krishna Kotami felt elated and she ran out to the city to find a house that had never had a death. She went all around the city asking at many houses but she could not find a house that had never had a death.

She took the body of her child to bury and said goodbye to him for the last time and then returned to the Buddha.





“Did you bring the mustard seed,” he asked.

“No,” she said. “I’m beginning to understand the lesson you are trying to teach me. Grief made me blind and I thought that only I had suffered at the hands of death.”

“Why have you come back?” asked the Buddha.

“To ask you to teach me the truth, of what death is, what might lay behind and beyond death and what if anything in me will not die?”

The Buddha began to teach her. “If you want to know the truth of life and death, you must reflect continually on this: There is only one law in the universe that never changes, that all things change and all things are impermanent. The death of your child has helped you to see that the realm we are in ‘Samsara’ is an ocean of unbearable suffering.

There is one way and one way only out of Samsara’s ceaseless round of birth and death, which is the path to liberation. Because pain has now made you ready to learn and your heart is opening to the truth I will show it to you.”

Krishna Gotami knelt at his feet and followed the Buddha for the rest of her life. Near the end of it, it is said she obtained enlightenment.

A watercolor illustration of a tropical landscape. In the foreground, there are large, vibrant green palm leaves on the left and right sides. The background is a soft, hazy green, suggesting a dense forest or a misty day. At the bottom, there are clusters of small, colorful flowers in shades of pink, purple, and orange. The overall style is soft and artistic, with visible brushstrokes and a gentle color palette.

**Produced by Family Health International, Cambodia Program
Funded by
The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**

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