

**Be part of the Solution to
HIV and AIDS**

NAMIBIA NATIONAL TEACHER'S UNION (NANTU)

Is HIV And AIDS The Same?

HIV (Human Immune deficiency Virus) is the virus that attacks the immune system of the body and reduces the body resistance to the disease. When the HIV and AIDS enter the human body it kills the 'supervisor' Helper T-cells (CD4 Cells) by entering into the cells and replicating, until the Helper T-cells explodes and dies. Once this happen more HIV enters your blood stream, and when all the T-cells/CD4 cells dies, the other cleaning cells (fighter T-cells) do not get instructions to help kill all germs such as flu, cancer, tuberculosis etc.

HIV can only enter the body through human bodily fluids:

- Semen
- Vaginal fluids
- Breast milk
- Blood

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) on the other hand is a clinical condition in which a person has one or more illnesses (e.g. diarrhoea, TB) due to the deficiency of the immune system, after the individual has been infected with HIV. One can be infected with HIV for many years and does not develop AIDS if one takes care of their health. A person does not die from AIDS but rather from the opportunistic diseases that more easily occur with a compromised immune system.

Remember AIDS is not a disease but a name given to the many different illnesses or opportunistic infections that happen once you are in the advanced stages of HIV infection. The period from the initial infection to full-blown AIDS can take years.

Why is HIV testing very important:

- You could be worried that you are HIV+, a test can put your mind at ease. You have more than 80% chance of testing negative.
- If you test negative, you will be able to adjust your sexual lifestyle so that you can avoid being infected in the future.
- If you test positive, you can make sure you protect yourself from re-infection and protect those you care for getting infected.
- Early detection can mean early interventions, which can help you to manage your health and delay the onset of AIDS.

When having a HIV test, it is advisable to attend a counselling session before and after the test.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) is a process that involves counselling to enable a person to make an informed choice whether to go for HIV test, the test is confidential.

What does VCT involve?

Voluntary Counselling and Testing involves the following:

Pre-Test Counselling

During Pre-test counselling, the counsellor discusses with the client issues about HIV prevention and the client's personal and family lifestyle. The clients mind is prepared to respond appropriately to the test results: HIV positive or negative. The counsellor explains fully to the client about HIV and AIDS, and the various modes of HIV transmission of the HIV. The client is also made aware that discussions and the test results are strictly confidential and it is between the client and the counsellor.

Testing

Sample collection: once the client feels that he or she is ready to go ahead with the HIV test, a sample of the person's blood is taken and tested by a professional laboratory technician. The test determines the presence or absence of HIV antibodies. Positive results signify the presence of HIV antibodies. Antibodies are proteins produced by the immune system to fight the specific virus. Confirmation (second) test must be done after two or three months to confirm the first results. This is necessary because if a person is infected with HIV, it takes between three weeks and three months for the client's immune system to produce antibodies. This period is called window period, at this period antibodies may give a negative result, but the client can transmit the virus to others.

Post Testing Counselling

After the testing the client meets his or her counsellor again when the results are ready for the post-test counselling. If the results are negative, the counsellor would discuss the options available for the client to remain negative forever. Behavioural changes like abstinence, avoiding risky life practices are recommended to the client. If the client's results turn out to be positive, the counsellor advises him or her on the option available to enable him or her to live positively. With the infection, the counsellor will help to support the client and listen to the worries that he or she would want to express. The counsellor will also recommend for the client places where he or she can get support.

The Test Results

You have tested HIV negative, what now?

- Encourage your partner to be tested
- Abstain from having unprotected sex
- Remain faithful to one sexual partner at a time
- Use condoms every time you have sex
- Get tested every time you change your sexual partner

Remember

- Contraceptive pills protects against pregnancy not HIV
- Blind trust can change lives forever

You have tested HIV positive, what now?

- **Choose to live!**

This might sound obvious but it is probably the most important thing you can do. Realize that you can live with the disease it is now termed as a 'Chronic Manageable Disease'.

- **Find an HIV Specialist**

Not all doctors specialize in HIV treatment.

- **Silence isn't golden**

No long-term survivor has kept his or her status a secret. Get help from a counsellor or support group.

- **Empower yourself**

This is your body, your life. Take responsibility by learning as much as you can about how your immune system works and how you can support your health.

- **Let it stop with you!**

Always practice safer sex with condoms you could infect your partner or get re-infected with another strain of the virus, which will help to kill you quicker.

Remember

Healthy Mind + Healthy Body + Healthy Soul = LONG LIFE

Healthy Mind:

- Choice to be a victim or a victor do you want to live or die?
- Get support emotional & practical
- Deal with your fears denial or fear only makes the problems worse
- Get your feelings out cry or scream if you have to
- Set your future goals (e.g. to obtain a doctorate, to see your child grow up and get married)

Body Matters

- Maintaining a healthy and nutritious diet is important for all people, but particularly for people living with HIV. A person living with HIV needs more food than normal, simply because the body is working harder to fight HIV, all the time.

Essential Foods

- Vegetable & Fruits
- Carbohydrates Roots vegetable & grains
- Protein Nuts, meat, peas, beans and dairy
- Food that contains Vitamins and Minerals

Foods to avoid

- Processed foods
- Fried Foods
- Sugar

Health Points

- Drink a minimum of 2 litres of fresh clean water a day
- Protect your stomach from parasites: this can be done by de-worming yourself regularly
- Avoid alcoholic drinks, cigarettes and drugs
- Stay at least one degree warmer than normal body temperature heat increases your ability to fight infections and germs (including HIV)
- Physical exercise helps to keep your body temperature higher. It also helps your body to fight infections by keeping you lymph glands working properly. Your body stores its fighter T-cells in the lymph glands, which work better when the muscles are moving.
- Get enough sleep, this is the best time your body repairs itself
- Use immune-strengthening & medicinal herbs (ask your doctor for approval)
- Go for regular medical check ups, preferably two or three times a year
- Treat any new opportunistic infection or a disease

Soul Matters

- **Live with integrity** what you think = what you say = what you do = what you feel
- **Live with Gratitude** Make a point of giving thanks for the good things you do have
- **Giving and Receiving** if you can give love, you will have no doubt to receive love as it is known to have helped heal many souls, minds and bodies.
- **Prayer and Meditation** Prayer seems to have healing effects we are not sure how it happens, but we know that it does ask specifically for what you want as if you can feel and experience it already. Be willing to receive! An attitude of gratitude can help to open you up to receiving! Meditation has a positive effect on the mind and body. Learning a meditation technique can help to manage stress.

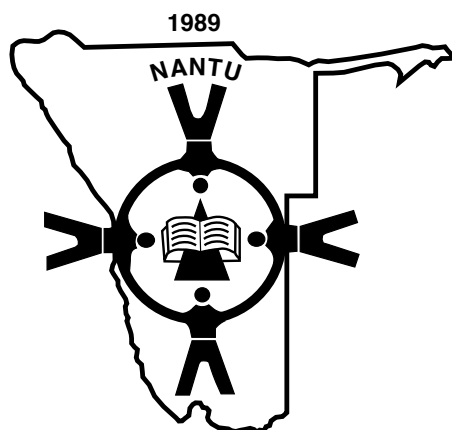
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Or

Positive Health Booklet Available At The Ministry Of Education

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