

# *Listening*

## PARENTS GUIDE



A guide for parents to talk to their children 8 to 12 years

# HOW TO TALK WITH A YOUNG CHILD

About good practices to prevent HIV/AIDS

1. Find a private and comfortable place (such as in the house after dinner at night) to talk one-to-one with each child.
2. Start by chatting with the child about any topic. You may start with non-sensitize topics. Eventually, ask the child if s/he has ever heard of the killer disease HIV/AIDS. You don't have to talk about everything at once!
3. If that is difficult, show the child this guide and read one of the questions to the child.
4. Advise the child on the points in this guide.
5. Speak freely. Don't be shy if your child has already learned some things in school. They still want and need to learn from you. In actual fact, the communication process is more important than the facts. All children care what you – their parents - want and expect of them. That is something schools cannot do!
6. **Ask questions** to see if the child understands.
7. Allow the child to ask you questions, share their opinions and experiences. Teenagers may be difficult at times, but open communication is the best way to help them. They need to know they can trust you not to yell or shout, and to listen well.
8. **Agree on specific actions the child and you will try** in the next week. Then, the next week discuss how well you and the child were able to do the actions. If there were difficulties, try to solve the problem in another way.
9. Always tell the child how much you love and care for her or him. Children want to please you when they hear nice things! Explain that you are advising the child in order to show your love and protect her or him from this killer disease.

# QUESTIONS

To ask & answer with your teenage child

## What is HIV/AIDS?

There is a disease in our communities. This disease is called AIDS or “slim.” It is technically called HIV/AIDS. This is because HIV is a virus that gets into a person’s body and destroys their immune system (their ability to fight off illness). Eventually, it becomes AIDS.

You can have the virus HIV for many years without people knowing it. You might not know and others cannot see. When the virus develops into AIDS you become very sick. This is because the immune system can no longer fight off disease-causing organisms such as bacteria and viruses.

Medicines can treat the early illnesses that develop because of the virus, but there is no cure.

## How can the virus that causes AIDS infect a person?

The virus is found in body fluids such as semen and blood of an infected person. There are many ways the virus can be transmitted to another person. The most common way is through unprotected sexual intercourse.

The virus can also be passed through sharing needles or razors with an infected person (such as through blood transfusions, injections, circumcision). The virus can NOT be passed through sharing utensils, sharing clothes, touching, shaking hands, sitting with, hugging or kissing an infected person. Mosquitoes can NOT pass the virus.

It is important to know these things because everyone should show respect and care for people infected with AIDS.

## TALKING ABOUT SEX

seriously does not encourage sex.

**Knowing *your* values will help  
your children abstain & stay safe.**

They have an illness, don't feel well and need everyone's support. You can safely play with infected people, go to school with infected people, eat with them and still be a good friend and neighbor.

## What are the signs of AIDS?

When a person has the virus (HIV positive), they do not show any signs of illness. In fact, infected people look quite healthy. Therefore, it is NOT possible to identify a person with the virus. An infected person can only know if they have the virus through a blood test at the hospital. This is very important to know because a person with the virus can still pass the disease to other people if they have unprotected sex.

When the virus develops into AIDS, a person gets very sick. S/he can suffer from different diseases such as diarrhea, pneumonia, tuberculosis and body sores (shingles). The person often loses a lot of weight.

## How can a person avoid AIDS?

### Abstain from sex until marriage



The best way to avoid AIDS is to abstain from sex until marriage. Abstinence means avoiding sexual intercourse. If it is not possible to abstain until marriage, then children should abstain until 18 years old. Then you take a blood test with your boyfriend or girlfriend *before* getting married. Once married, the husband and wife should only have sex with each other.

Abstaining from sex and playing with children of the opposite sex will help you stay in school to complete P7 by avoiding pregnancy and diseases. This means you will have a good chance of a bright future.

## How can a person abstain from sex to avoid AIDS?

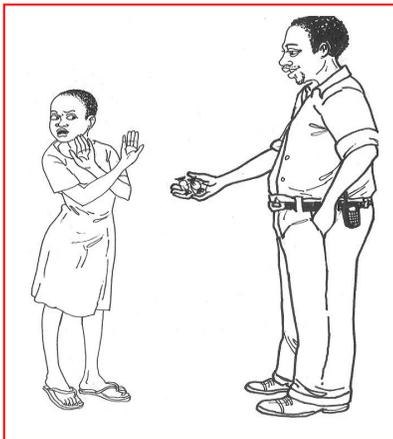
### Avoid risky situations

To abstain, children must avoid dangerous situations. This means that they should not play outside at night without being watched. ➡Parent, arrange for alternative entertainment for children at night or supervise closely.

Children should never go to the shops or other places at night. ➡If possible, parent, do not send children out at night. Send another person.



Nighttime sleeping arrangements often put children in danger. Children should not stay alone with an older person or someone of the opposite sex who is not their parent. Relatives, houseboys, and even friends cannot be trusted. It is better to be safe than to take a chance. ➡Parent, explain where the child should sleep each night and what to do if someone new comes. Explain what "bad touches" are, and what to do if a child is touched badly.



You can also be put at risk by accepting gifts. Do not accept gifts from anyone. Money or gifts are often used as a way to entice you into relationships. Your body has no price on it. Life cannot be bought and sold for small gifts.

School children: Never go alone to a teacher's home or classroom. Always bring a friend or friends with you.

## How can a person abstain from sex to avoid HIV/AIDS?

### Refuse advances or proposals

You have the right to refuse any advance or proposal. \*Practice refusing proposals with your children. Ask them for ideas about what they could say. Suggest others such as "Go and talk to my parents." "Find someone else who is interested." "That is nothing new or interesting to me." "I have a bright future ahead."

If you are proposed to by an older person, come and tell me without delay.

## How can a person avoid HIV/AIDS through other ways?

### Practice safe use of sharp instruments

It is also good to avoid sharing needles or razor blades with other people. Bring your own syringes to the health center and razors to the barbershops. Do not even share with family members.