HIV BASICS

Is it true that if you have sex with a boy who is HIV positive and is on ARVs you can not get HIV? Kabasuga Poluce, Ave Maria SS, Kyenjojo.

Dear Kabasuga, taking ARVs when HIV positive is very good. It keeps you healthy and reduces chances of spreading HIV. However, the risk of spreading HIV is there and high. Avoid early sex or use condoms correctly every time you have sex to lower the risk of transmitting HIV and getting unwanted pregnancy. Counsellor; Dr Joel Lwasa, St Charles Lwanga Hospital Buikwe.

In 2014, school children from Central Uganda petitioned the then Minister of Education, Honourable Jessica Alupo, to save them from sexual harassment by teachers.

Straight Talk visited Moroto and Napak districts in Karamoja to get insights from students on sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, touches, requests for sexual favours and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature by anyone.

As candidates prepare for examinations, Betty (not her real name), an S4 student of Nadunget SS Moroto, is stuck at home. She was expelled from school because she had an affair with a teacher.

“The Disciplinary Committee counselled and advised them to end the relationship. However, we were surprised to see them still engaging in the relationship. The student was expelled. The School Board is yet to decide the teacher’s fate.” One of the teachers in Nadunget SS, says.

Betty is among millions of students who are coerced into sexual relationships by some teachers or school proprietors.

This is wrong and against the ‘Teachers’ Code of Conduct.

Straight Talk visited Moroto and Napak districts in Karamoja to get insights from students on sexual harassment.

HSU/AIDS

Edung Diouf, 15, S1, Nadunget SS, Moroto says:

“When I was in primary, a female teacher defiled a P5 boy and infected him with HIV. The teacher used to give him food and sweets. I advise you to say NO to such gifts.”

A study done by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2015 revealed that 82% of secondary school students and 77% of primary school children had experienced sexual abuse at school. About 67% of the perpetrators were male teachers, 22% fellow students, 5% female teachers and 6% non teaching staff.

The 2014 national study on ‘Assessing Child Protection Safety and Security Issues for children in Uganda’ found out that 24% of the teenage pregnancy, early marriages and defilement are by teachers.

Horrible Consequences

You could be tempted to fall in love with your teacher for marks, money or a phone but the consequences are deadly.

You may;
• Contract STDs/HIV/AIDS
• Drop out of school
• Get unwanted pregnancy
• Be chased away from home
• Get harmed by the teacher’s partner
• Lose respect in society

Many young people who get sexually abused never speak out. This is because of shame, threats from the abusers or molesters, fear and lack of knowledge about where to report.

Moroto District Inspector of Schools, Lokeris Hellen says:

Students, be the whistle blowers and report such cases so that the law can take its course. You can report to the Senior Woman or Man teacher, prefects, Police or the District Education Office.

We are going to follow up the case at Nadunget SS in Moroto and take necessary action against the teacher. Teachers, respect yourselves. You are Parents and therefore should not have sexual relations with children you are entrusted to protect from violence.

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How we relate with teachers

Students spend most of the time at school. It is important to establish and maintain a healthy relationship with your teachers to stay safe and excel in academics. Some of you said you relate well with teachers. Others said, “it is terrible. Read on!”

Esther Abura, 17, S1, Kangole Girls SS Napak, says: “Our teachers always advise us to abstain from sex. Others have been diverting me to use contraceptives. Some teachers have other motives. I was asked by a teacher to visit her home. She said she needed to touch me in order to make sure I was not pregnant.”

Deborah Kiyonga, 18, S3, St Andrew SS, says: “Some of my friends are having hard time with some teachers. When they turn down their advances, they threaten to make them fail their examinations.”

Girl, 17, Kangole Girls SS says: “I went to a teacher to ask for a phone number. He promised to marry me. He invited me to his home but I disappointed him. He stopped disturbing me.”

Albert John Ngorok, 21, S2, Napak, says, “I feel good.”

Mr Ronald Omara, Education Specialist Kampala, says: “Respect your teachers but also learn to be assertive especially when they try to sexually harass or abuse you.”

We can end sexual harassment

Ending sexual harassment is possible. The head teacher of Kangole Girls SS, Sr Noeline Namusisi says: “Schools should work with teachers, students and parents to create a conducive teaching and learning environment. Strengthen measures that limit temptation.”

1. Teachers should be kind to us and value our role models. Discourage students from visiting your homes.
2. Talk to non-teaching staff to desist from abusing students.

Your bodies are a dwelling place of God. Respect them.

Remind parents about their responsibilities to discourage children from getting tempted to take gifts from potential deflectors.

3. Some of our teachers have done that. We have always investigated and taken necessary action.

Appreciate the little you get from your parents and guardians. Remember, one minute of carelessness can ruin your future. You may be promised free marks or gifts, but are they worth the consequences of early sex?

Resolutions, are you on track?

At the beginning of the year, some of you made resolutions. A resolution is a decision that you make to do or not to do something. You could choose to learn a skill or change bad habits such as alcohol and drug abuse. We are half way into the year, what have you been able to achieve?

Rashida Nantabo, 14, S3, Nabisunsa Girls School Kampala, says: “I have dropped friends who have been diverting me to use less things instead of reading books.”

Editor: Friends have a big influence on our lives, but sometimes they push us to make wrong decisions. Always say NO to bad peer pressure.

Allan Katumba, 18, S4, St Andrew SS, says: “My resolution is to excel in academics. My first term’s results were not bad.”

Congratulations for pursuing your goals.

If you haven’t achieved your goals, Do not give up. Winners never quit.

Thomas Edison, an American inventor failed more than 1,000 times before succeeding in the development of an electricity light bulb. Believe in yourself. Find out what is hindering you. Talk to someone who has achieved the results you want and learn from them.

Straight Talk, June - July 2017

TEACHERS

OBSERVE YOUR CODE OF CONDUCT

By the very nature of your work, you interact with students on a daily basis in order to effectively teach. However, sometimes dealing with individual students can cause problems such as teachers falling in love with students and vice versa. You can avoid such temptations by making sure you:

• Always meet students in a public place such as a staff room, class, or on the compound where people can see or even hear your conversation. A secret place such as an office often breeds trouble.
• Meet a group of students rather than an individual. This gives witness as to what transpires. It also discourages a student who might have other motives.
• Interact with students within the school environment. Communicating through WhatsApp or Facebook reduces the professional touch and leaves room for an improper relationship.
• Document all dealings with students to keep track of your interactions.
• Meet students only during the day.

The Teachers’ Code of Conduct states: The teacher shall not sexually molest, harass or have a sexual relationship with the learner.

By Ronald Omara, Education specialist.

Scientific Corner


Dear Stephen, Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) is caused by a bacteria. It attacks the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra.

Symptoms include: A burning feeling when urinating, pain in back or abdomen, smelly urine and fever.

Prevention: Abstain from sex, wipe from front to back after using a toilet to prevent the bacteria from entering the urinary system.

Counsellor: Dr Joel Lwasa, St Charles Lwanga Hospital, Buikwe.

Please report any form of sexual harassment or abuse to: District Probation and Welfare officers – at all district headquarters, Child and Family Protection Office – at all Police Stations in Uganda, Non-Governmental Organisations including: FIDA, ANPPCCAN, Action Aid, Straight Talk Foundation, Hope After Rape and Raising Voices.
You could be at risk of HIV

Most of you know how to prevent HIV. However, cases of new infections in Uganda are on the rise. Over 500 girls and young women aged 15 to 24, get infected with HIV every week, according to the Uganda AIDS Commission. Every year, about 83,000 people get infected with HIV. In Africa, Uganda is second to South Africa, where at least 2,363 get infected with HIV every week, compared to 468 for Kenya, 491 for Tanzania, 25 for Rwanda and 2 for Burundi, according to the UNAIDS report, 2013.

“I love my boyfriend so much and we have had sex together,” Girl, 17, S3, St. Daniel Comboni SS Napak, says:

“My friend fell for a married man who was infected with HIV. She gave birth to a baby who died two months later. She also later died.”

Prisca Dida, 15, S1, Moroto Parents SS.

Test for HIV, know your status

How can you know that someone has HIV/AIDS?

Brenda, Kangole Girls SS.

Testing for HIV is the only sure way you can know whether you have HIV or not. If you are in a relationship, test together with your partner.

Girl, 17, S3, St. Daniel Comboni SS Napak, says: “I love my boyfriend so much and we have had an HIV test.”

Testing for HIV is a life saving decision because it helps you to prevent getting or transmitting HIV. It is important to start treatment early if you are HIV positive to stay alive. Get information on staying safe if you are negative.

Do not rely on the HIV test results of your partner. You could be in a discordant relationship where one of you is positive and the other is negative. Discordance is not permanent. The negative partner can get infected if they continue having unprotected sex.

Where can one get tested?

• Government health Centres
• AIDS Information Centres
• TASO
• Naguru Teenage Centre
• Uganda cares

Know your body

What happens when HIV enters the body? Sarafina Chama, 18, S1, Kangole Girls SS Napak.

HIV is spread through contact with body fluids of an infected person. These includes; blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk.

Having unprotected sex with an infected person is the main mode of HIV transmission.

When HIV enters the body, it attacks the white blood cells and weakens the body’s ability to fight diseases. If HIV is not treated, the person can easily get AIDS. There is no cure for HIV/AIDS, but people living with HIV must take ARVs everyday for the rest of their life to live healthier and productive lives. ARVs prevent HIV from multiplying and advancing to AIDS.

HIV medicines given to infected women during pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding and to their babies after birth reduce the risk of mothers infecting their babies.

Counsellor: Dr Mariam Nabwire, Mulago Hospital.

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) reduces the risk of HIV

If you or your friend is raped, rush to the hospital for PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis). These are emergency ARVs given to people who have been exposed to HIV to reduce the risk of HIV infection. Exposure to HIV can happen in any of the following ways; if a person has been raped, a condom bursts or slips off during sex, health workers pierce themselves while working on people living with HIV and when one is involved in an accident. PEP must be started within three days after the exposure to HIV.

THE POSITIVE DIARY
My dream came true

Josephine Nabukunya Tumusime, 22, was born with HIV. She recently graduated from Makerere University. In this issue, Josephine shares her academic journey.

Twenty-fourth February 2017, is a day I will live to remember. I graduated from Makerere University with a Bachelors of Arts in Social Sciences.

My mother never thought I would make the grade. I used to miss classes due to ill health. When I started taking ARVs, I got better and worked hard until I realised my dream of being a graduate.

HIV should never make you drop out of school. You can manage it. I was born with HIV but I have been able to excel.

You may face challenges but do your best to succeed. Revise your books, abstain from sex, stay focused and chase your dream.

I always wanted to be a writer and an author of a book. I spent my high school years writing poems, participating in creative writing contests and today, I share my stories in Straight Talk magazines.

It is possible to turn your aspirations into reality. I wish you all the best in your academic journey.

Straight Talkers, Do you have questions for Josephine? Send them to PO BOX 22366, Kampala.
Support children with disabilities to stay in school. They too have a right to education.

Is it possible for me to have HIV even when I have never had sex? AB Mwase, 18, S3, Standard SS, Kampala.

Dear AB, Yes it is possible. HIV is spread in two major ways; through unprotected sex with an infected person and from mother to the baby during pregnancy, delivery or breast feeding. Some children are born with HIV.

Is it true that when you suck a boy's penis and swallow sperm you can get pregnant? Sylvia Nekesa, 19, Bugiri High School.

Dear Sylvia, It is not true. A girl can get pregnant when sperm are introduced into her vagina. However, sucking a boy's penis can expose you to sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.

How can I cool myself when I see a girl's breasts? Stephen, 19, Kitebi SS, Wakiso.

Dear Stephen, to be easily aroused by sight of a girl's breasts usually has a predisposing factor. For example watching pornographic material and unproductive sexual talk. Avoid looking at the girls’ breasts. Occupy your mind with positive thoughts. You have the ability to control sexual feelings.

My friend told me that our teacher said that he loves her. What advice can I give her? Ben Lukhoo, 18, Bugiri HS.

Dear Ben, your friend should know that involvement in a relationship with a teacher is wrong. She should let the teacher know that it is not right for her to have a sexual relationship with him. If he insists, she should report this teacher to the Senior woman teacher, her parents or Head teacher.

What should I do when I get my first period on my way to school? Sophia Nalinya, Kampala.

Dear Sophia, starting your periods on your way to school can be embarrassing. However, when it happens, you can ask a friend or a senior woman teacher when you reach school to help give you a sanitary pad from home to address this emergency.

My mother forces me to carry out pulling of part of my private parts. What importance does it have on girls because I feel it is funny? J. Kakunda, Kalinabiri SS, Kampala.

Dear Kakunda, “pulling” or labia elongation has no scientific importance. It is mainly a traditional practice among some ethnic groups in Uganda. It is not compulsory. Talk to your mother about how you feel about this practice.

Is it normal for a girl to have her menstruation only for a day? Atukwalasi Christabel, Ayume Memorial SS, Koboko.

Dear Christabel, In the beginning, girls usually have irregular periods due to hormonal imbalance. However, with time, the number of days may stabilize between 3 to 7 days. Seek medical help if this problem persists.

My friend has a boutique. I gave her my clothes. But she calls me even when she has no clothes and wants to know my home. What can I do? Brian Naalya, 19, St Kizito HS, Namugongo.

Dear Brian, disassociate yourself from her. She may have ill intentions of harming you. If you do not want her to know your home, don’t take her there.

If a person is vaccinated against Hepatitis A or B, will he get these diseases? Yousif Saamaan Kuku, 29, S4, Francis Ayume Memorial SS, Koboko.

Hepatitis A and B are caused by a virus that attacks the liver. Vaccination against Hepatitis A and B reduces the risk of catching these diseases. Test and get the vaccine if you are negative.

Counsellors: Dr Joel Lwasa, St Charles Luanga Hospital Buikwe and Ms Jane Nafija, Straight Talk Foundation.

Advice to Herinyom Hakim

In Straight Talk issue of March -April, 2017, Herinyom Hakim from Progression SS Kitintale Kampala, said; I love Music more than revising books. What can I do?

Brenda Babiry, 15, Kamuli College says: “Pursuing your talent is good but you also need education to be a better musician. You will never regret.”

Daniel Muya, 14, S1, Moroto HS says: “Try to balance music and studies. Plan for your time well. Get time for books and time for Music. Education is the key to success.”

William Bamuja, 20, S6, Uphill College Mbuya says: “There is time for everything. First concentrate on studied and get better grades.”

Students of Hornby HS Kabale say: “Support children with disabilities to stay in school. They too have a right to education.”

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