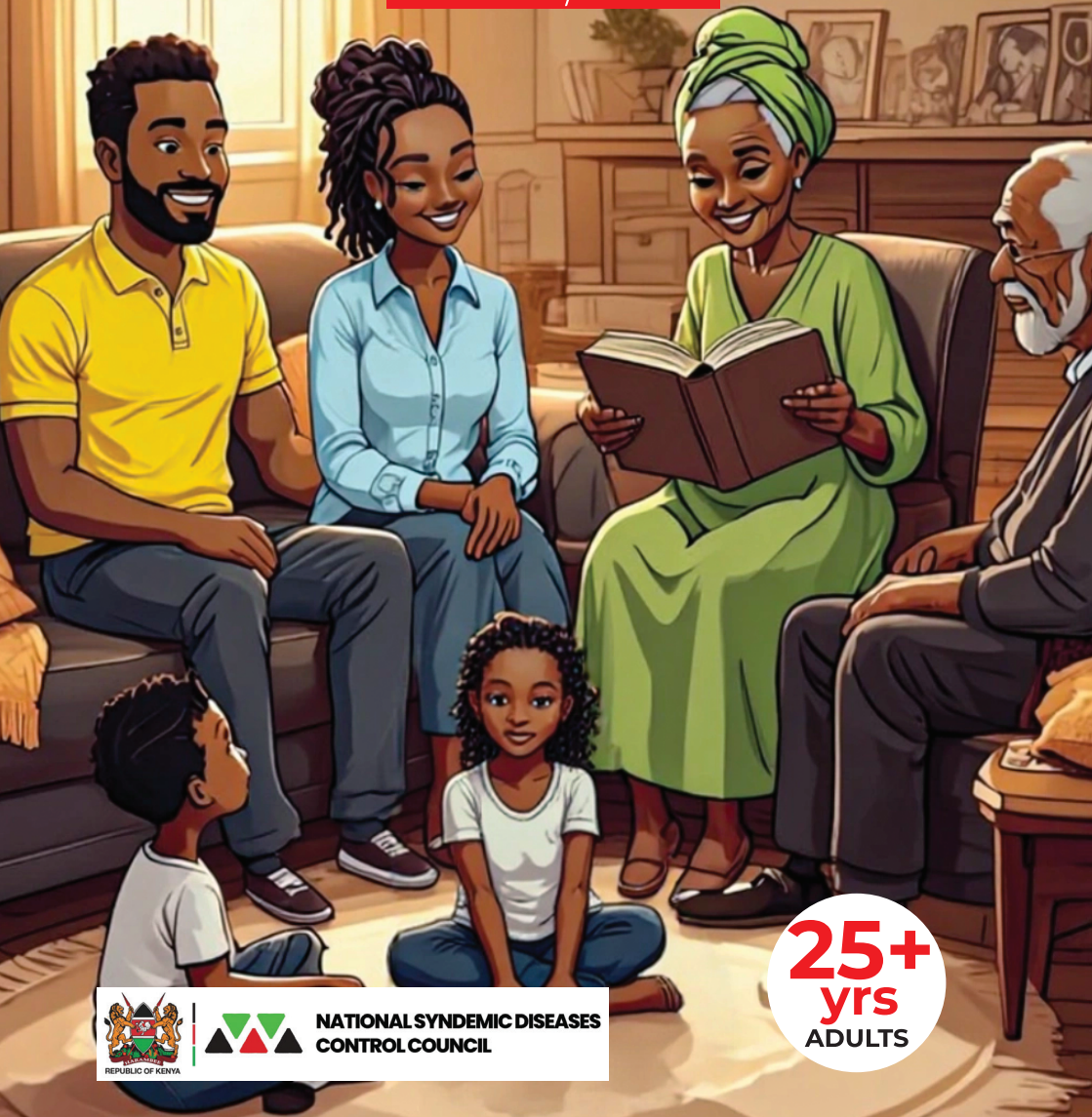


# Better Choices

*Healthy Life*



**25+**  
**yrs**  
**ADULTS**



**NATIONAL SYNDemic DISEASES  
CONTROL COUNCIL**

**HIV and AIDS**

**Sexual and  
Reproductive  
Health (SRH)**

**Tuberculosis (TB)**

**Gender Based  
Violence (GBV)**

**T  
O  
P  
I  
C  
S**



# Healthy Life



## Introduction

This booklet provides clear and simplified information on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB), gender and health. It includes explanations, prevention methods, treatment options, and legal protections available in Kenya, particularly through the HIV & AIDS Tribunal.



**HIV and AIDS**



# Understanding HIV and AIDS

*What's the difference  
between*

**HIV &  
AIDS**



## What is HIV & AIDS?

- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks the cells in the immune system thereby weakening the body's ability to fight infections.
- AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) occurs when HIV severely damages the immune system, making it difficult for the body to fight off infections and illnesses. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection.

## Body Fluids that can transmit HIV include: -

Blood, semen ("cum"), pre-seminal fluid ("pre-cum"), vaginal fluids, rectal fluids, and breastmilk.



Semen(cum)  
pre-seminal fluid (pre-cum)



vaginal fluids,  
rectal fluids



Blood



Breastmilk

## How is HIV transmitted?

HIV can affect anyone regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender, age, or where they live.

HIV is transmitted through: -

- Having unprotected Sex (vaginal, anal and to a lesser extent oral sex) with an infected person.
- Sharing contaminated Needles, syringes, and sharp objects.
- From HIV positive mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.

### Remember

All these ways of transmitting HIV are preventable.

### MYTHS

- You can get HIV by hugging or sharing utensils.
- Only 'immoral' people get HIV.
- Having HIV means not getting married or having children.
- I can get HIV from a mosquito bite.

### FACTS

- HIV is not spread through handshake, hugging or sharing utensils.
- HIV can affect anyone. It is about exposure to the virus.
- HIV-positive people can marry, have children, and live fulfilling lives with the right care.
- Mosquitoes or other biting insects do not spread HIV.

## How to Prevent HIV

### Condom Use

Using condoms correctly and consistently is a highly effective way to prevent HIV and other STIs.



### Know Your Status

Regular HIV testing is the gateway to prevention and treatment. You and your partner should test together.

**Abstinence and being faithful to one partner of known HIV status.**

# ABSTINENCE

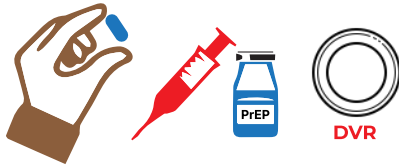
### PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)

PrEP is a daily pill or vaginal Ring or an injectable taken by HIV-negative people who are at high risk of getting HIV. It is recommended for:

- People in relationships with HIV-positive partners (Discordant couples).
- Individuals with multiple sexual partners.
- People who do not consistently use condoms with multiple sexual partners.

In Kenya, PrEP is available free of charge in public health facilities and at cost in private facilities.





## PrEP Options Available in Kenya

Kenya offers four PrEP options to help individuals choose a method that fits their lifestyle and HIV-prevention needs: Oral PrEP, the Dapivirine Vaginal Ring (DVR), Cabotegravir Long-Acting Injection (CAB-LA), and Lenacapavir (LEN).

### a) Oral PrEP

Oral PrEP is highly effective in reducing the risk of acquiring HIV. There are two ways to take it:

- **Daily PrEP:**

Take one pill every day. This option is ideal if you cannot plan when you will have sex. Protection builds after a few days, so continue using condoms during the first week.

- **Male-focused PrEP (2+1+1):**

For men who can plan sex at least 2 hours in advance.

- Take 2 pills before sex.
- Take 1 pill 24 hours later.
- Take 1 pill another 24 hours after that.

### b) Dapivirine Vaginal Ring (DVR)

The DVR is a soft, flexible ring inserted into the vagina to prevent HIV. It slowly releases medicine where protection is needed and is replaced every 28 days.

- Approved in Kenya for women aged 18+.
- Offers a discreet, woman-controlled HIV-prevention method.
- Protects only against HIV from vaginal sex.
- Does not protect against pregnancy, STIs, anal sex, oral sex, or shared needles.
- Condoms are still recommended for full protection.

### c) Injectable Long-Acting PrEP Cabotegravir Long-Acting (CAB-LA)

CAB-LA is an antiretroviral injection given in the buttock muscle.

- First two doses: 1 month apart

- After that: one injection every 2 months.

Reduces HIV risk significantly:

- 66% more effective than oral PrEP for men.
- 88% more effective for women.
- 80% higher effectiveness overall.

### d) Lenacapavir (LEN)

LEN is a long-acting PrEP option for adults and adolescents (16+ years) weighing at least 35 kg.

- Given as two small injections under the skin every 6 months.
- Before starting, take two tablets on Day 1 and two tablets on Day 2.
- Provides over 96% protection against HIV infection.

## Remember

- PrEP prevents HIV but not other STIs, so condoms are still important.
- You must take an HIV test before each scheduled dose to confirm you are HIV-negative.
- Adhering to doses on time is essential for strong and consistent protection.

## PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)

PEP is an emergency HIV prevention method. It involves taking antiretroviral medicines within 72 hours after an exposure to HIV (such as unprotected sex, needle injury, or sexual assault). It must be taken daily for 28 days.

## Difference between PrEP and PEP

	PrEP	PEP
<b>Definition</b>	PrEP stands for Pre-exposure Prophylaxis.	PEP stands for Post exposure prophylaxis
<b>When is it taken?</b>	Before HIV exposure.	After possible HIV exposure and should be started as soon as possible, within 72 hours
<b>Who is it for</b>	PrEP is a daily pill (combined ARVs) that is taken by people at high risk of HIV infection for e.g., those who engage in sex with multiple partners and risky sex like anal sex.	PEP is taken by people who have been exposed to HIV e.g., occupational exposure by health care professionals and exposed persons in case of unprotected sexual act with someone of unknown HIV status
<b>Timeline</b>	PrEP should be taken 7 days before exposure and continued as long as you are at risk and stopped 7 days after last exposure.	PEP should be started within 72 hours after exposure and continued for another 28 days.
<b>How effective is it?</b>	With effective and consistent use, PrEP can reduce the risk of HIV infection by: Over 90% for penile–vaginal sex, about 74% for injection drug use, and up to 86% for men who have sex with men.	PEP can reduce the risk of getting HIV by more than 80% and should be started immediately after exposure to increase effectiveness.

### Where to get it

Both PrEP and PEP can be accessed from government health facilities for free of charge.

### Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC)

Circumcision reduces the risk of HIV transmission in men by up to 60%. It should be combined with other methods like condom use.

## Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT)



Mama, I'm growing inside you, give me the best chance in life. Please go for your antenatal visits and take your HIV treatment seriously, so I can be born strong, safe, and HIV-free."



### ***HIV and STI's testing during pregnancy.***

Testing for HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B during pregnancy helps ensure a healthy pregnancy and delivery. These can be passed from mother to baby, but with early testing and treatment, this risk can be prevented. Screening for other STIs is also recommended.

### ***When Will I Be Tested?***

At the first ANC (antenatal care) visit you will be screened for a number of things including HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B. A repeat HIV test should be done in the third trimester. If found to be HIV positive, the health care provider shall advise on the next steps.

### ***What if I am a pregnant women living with HIV?***

If pregnant and living with HIV, you are advised to continue taking your ARVs for your own health and that of the unborn child/ren. Visit the health facility as soon as you know you are pregnant for ANC services.

### ***For babies born to HIV Positive Mother***

Babies born to HIV-positive mothers should continue with all postnatal check-ups and mothers should keep taking their treatment as advised by a healthcare provider. Mothers should ensure the babies are also exclusively breastfed and take ARVs to prevent HIV infection as advised by the Health Care Provider.

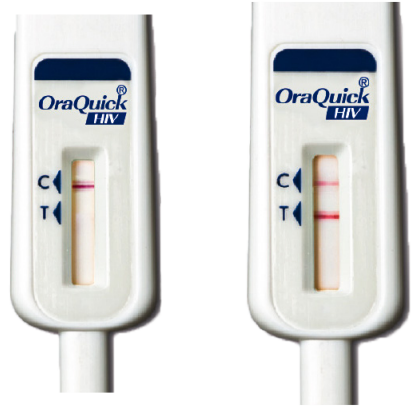


# HIV Testing Services

## What is an HIV Test?

It is a test that checks whether a person has been infected with HIV. These tests primarily detect antibodies produced by the body in response to the HIV virus.

For most people, it takes a month for these antibodies to develop. Antibodies can be found in blood or oral fluid found around the lining of the gums.

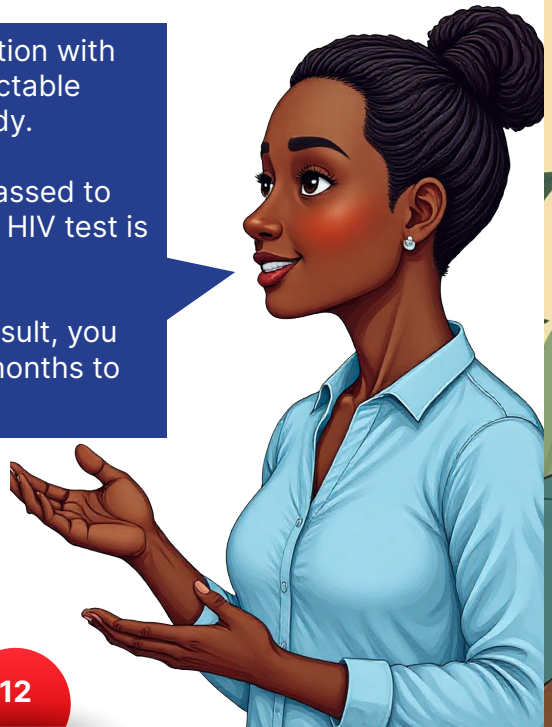


## Window period

This is the period between infection with HIV and the appearance of detectable antibodies to the virus in the body.

During this period, HIV can be passed to another person even though the HIV test is negative.

If you receive an HIV negative result, you need to repeat the test after 3 months to confirm your status.

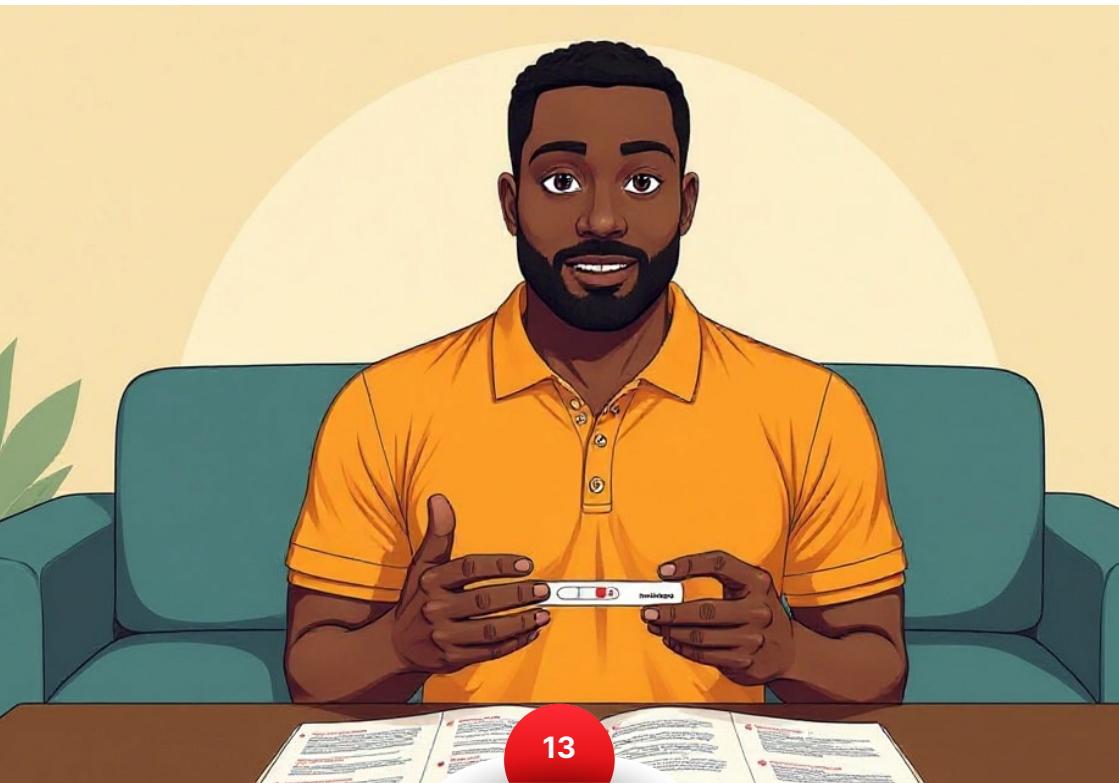


## HIV Self-test

An HIV self-test is a quick and private way to check your HIV status. You can do it yourself at home or any place where you feel comfortable. The result is ready in about 20 minutes.

### How to Use It:

- Read the instructions before you start and follow each step carefully.
- Do not rush - wrong steps can give incorrect results.
- Use the right sample (e.g., some tests need blood, others need a swab, do not use saliva unless the test asks for it).
- If the test does not work (invalid result), try again with a new kit or go to a health facility.
- The helpline number is in the kit in case you need support.
- In the event of a HIV positive test result, one should see a health care provider for a confirmatory test and getting appropriate treatment.

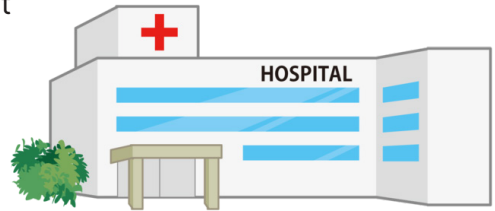


## Why should I get an HIV test?

Knowing your HIV status is important for two reasons; if infected you can start treatment early, enabling you to live a long quality life and prevent the spread of HIV to others. If HIV is negative, you learn how to protect yourself from HIV infection.

## Where can I get tested for HIV?

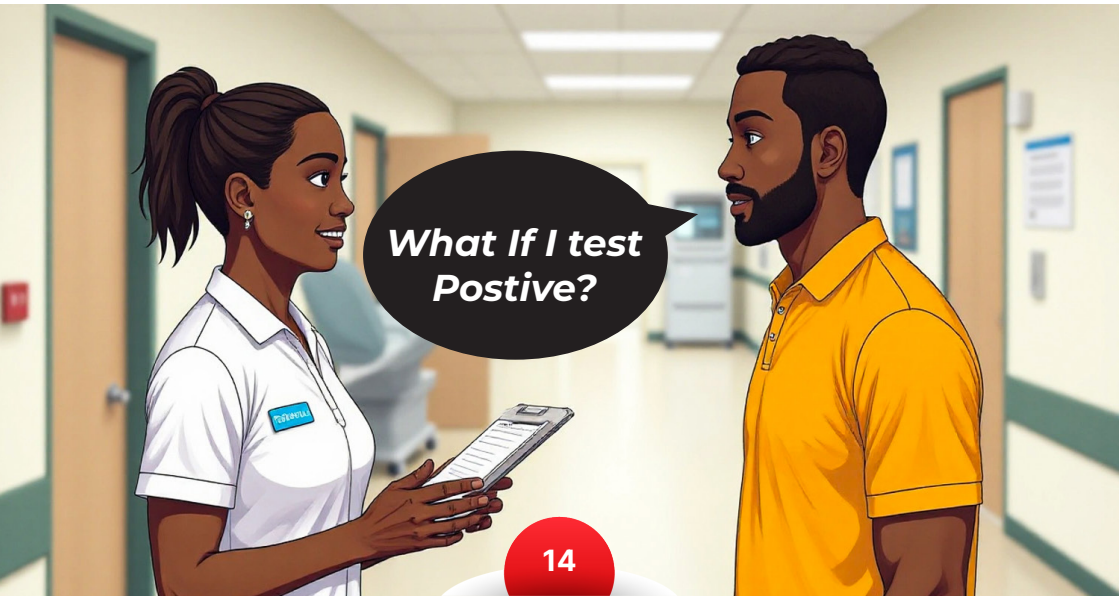
One can get tested for HIV for free at any public health hospital and some faith-based health facilities. one can also access HIV testing services at private health facilities and private doctors at a small fee.



## What if I test HIV positive?

If you test HIV positive, you shall be counselled on living positively and adopting a healthy lifestyle. You should also be started on HIV treatment to suppress the HIV virus. It is important to adhere to the HIV treatment to suppress the virus and live a long quality life.

You shall also be referred to a Psychosocial support group/s to link up with other people living with HIV. It is important to know that you are not alone and there are other people living healthy with HIV. HIV is not a death sentence.



## What does a HIV negative test mean?

It means that there were no HIV antibodies that were found in the blood at the time of testing. You should therefore learn how to prevent yourself from getting infected to maintain the HIV negative results.

However, one should still test after the window period (3 months) as one could have been infected, and the immune system has not yet produced anti-bodies to show infection in a blood test.



## Treatment

Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) are medicines used to manage HIV by reducing the amount of virus in the body.

Starting ARVs as soon as possible after diagnosis helps protect the immune system, improves health, and reduces the risk of transmitting HIV to others.

Adhering to ARVs - taking them every day as prescribed is essential for the medicine to work effectively.

Good adherence helps achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load, which means the virus is very low in the body such that it is less likely to be passed on through sex. (U=U: Undetectable = Untransmittable). Skipping doses can lead to drug resistance, making the treatment less effective. That is why it is important to start ARVs early and stick to the schedule every day.





# Living with HIV

## Lifestyle Modifications

To stay healthy, take care of yourself by doing the following: eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly, manage stress, get adequate sleep, quit smoking, and limit alcohol consumption.

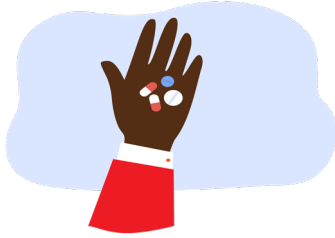
## Aging with HIV and NCDs (non-communicable diseases)

With ongoing HIV treatment, many people are now living longer, healthier lives. As they grow older, they may face other health issues like high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, or memory problems just like HIV negative individuals. However, people living with HIV may be at high risk of these other health issues due to the HIV infection itself and the side effect of prolonged use of medication.



Even young people living with HIV can experience these conditions earlier, which is why regular check-ups and healthy habits are important.

- Continue taking your ARVs every day.
- Eat a balanced diet and stay physically active.
- Avoid smoking and limit alcohol use.
- Go for regular health check-ups to detect and manage other illnesses early.
- Consult a health worker about all the medicines or supplements you are using to prevent harmful drug interactions.



*Take ARVs every day*



*Take a Balanced Diet*



*Avoid Smoking and  
limit alcohol*



*Regular medical  
checkups & consultations*

### **People living with HIV may also need**

- Mental health and emotional support.
- Safe spaces to share and connect with others.
- Help managing many medicines at once.
- Social peer networks to stay connected.

Getting older with HIV is possible and with good care and support, people can continue to live full, healthy lives.

# Discordant Couples

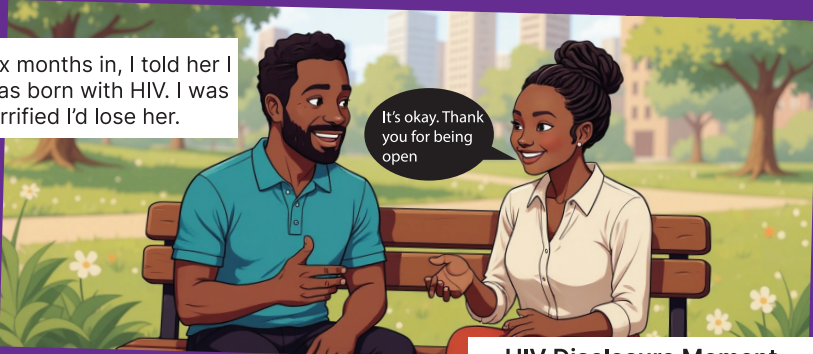
## Our love, Our Choice- A Discordant Couple's story

“We met at church, became close friends, and eventually started dating. Everything felt right.



Meeting at a social function

“Six months in, I told her I was born with HIV. I was terrified I'd lose her.



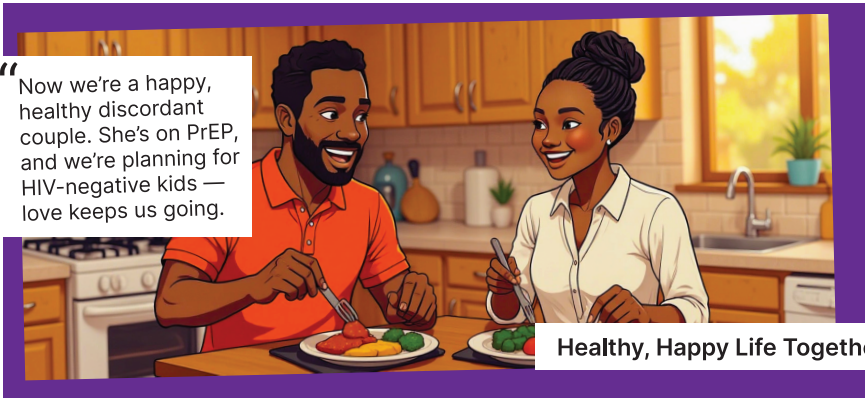
HIV Disclosure Moment

I never miss my medication. My viral load is now undetectable, and I'm healthy and strong.



Doctor's Visit

“ Now we’re a happy, healthy discordant couple. She’s on PrEP, and we’re planning for HIV-negative kids — love keeps us going.



Healthy, Happy Life Together

*“Today, we are a discordant couple, he is HIV-positive, I am negative and we are living a healthy, happy life together. I take PrEP to stay protected, and with medical support, we plan to have HIV-negative children. Despite stigma, love and honesty keep us strong.”*

It is recommended to visit the health facility for safe conception methods if the couple wants to have children.

A discordant relationship is when one partner is living with HIV, and the other is HIV negative. They can live healthy lives and have HIV-negative children by:

- Using condoms consistently and correctly.
- Taking PrEP to protect the HIV-negative partner.
- Ensuring the HIV positive partner stays on treatment to achieve undetectable virus level” undetectable = untransmittable (U=U)”
- Testing regularly and maintaining open communication and mutual support.



## When Both Partners Are HIV-Positive

- HIV does not stop you from dating, marrying, or having kids.
- With treatment (ART), people with HIV live long, healthy lives.
- Staying faithful helps prevent STIs and new HIV strains.
- Many couples thrive and raise families.
- Openness, care, and regular health checks build strong relationships.

Love is possible with or without HIV. Let us end stigma and support healthy, loving relationships.

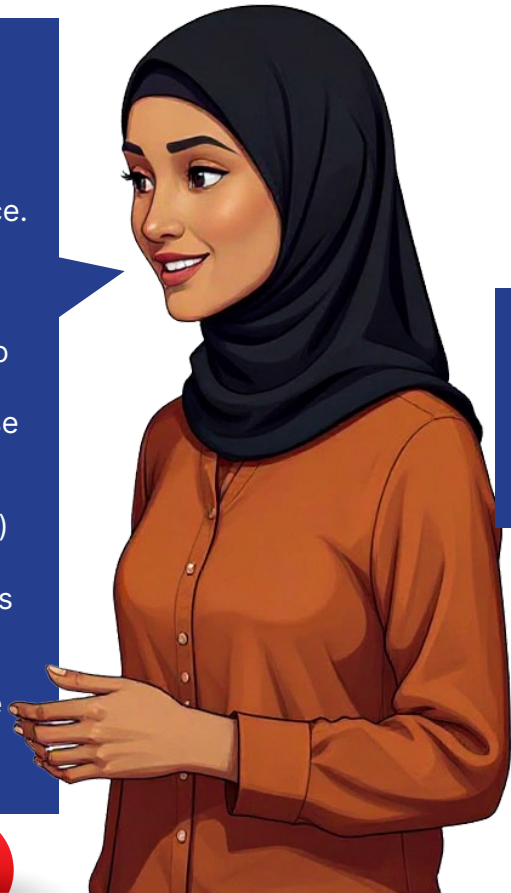
### HIV Disclosure, Safety & Support

HIV disclosure involves telling another person or other people that you have HIV. This can be family, potential partners, friends, or colleagues. It is normal to feel scared or unsure about sharing your HIV status. You are more than your diagnosis and you deserve love, respect, and support.

#### Encouraging safe and supportive HIV Disclosure

Sharing your status is personal and often influenced by culture, gender roles, and fear of rejection or violence. In Kenya, many people face similar struggles.

- You have the right to choose who to tell, when, and how.
- Disclosure can feel harder in close relationships or family settings.
- Girls and women may face risks like gender-based violence (GBV) after disclosure.
- Support is available - peer groups and trained counsellors can help you plan and feel safe.
- Many people living with HIV have loving and healthy relationships.



## Steps to take before disclosure.

You should decide who you want to disclose to and why? For example, is it to get their support or to get them to test for HIV if he/she is a sexual partner

- Analyze how disclosure shall affect you and the people that you tell including the relationships.
- Consider if the person you tell shall keep your information private and confidential.
- You should disclose when you feel ready.
- You should disclose when the other partner is also in a good place mentally and not managing other problems.
- Disclose from a place where you feel safe, is private enough and can get support, if necessary, for example home, health facility or public park.
- You can request a third party like a counsellor or health care provider to also support in the disclosure process.
- Having a strong social network like other HIV positive peers is also important to get support during the process.



It is important to consider the above aspects as not every disclosure process may have a positive outcome. One may also face stigma, rejection, or violence. Therefore, the decision to disclose should be yours alone and you are the one in charge of who, when and how to do it.

## Benefits of Disclosure

- One gets Love and support in managing HIV.
- It is an empowering process.
- It helps in addressing stigma and discrimination by showing people living with HIV can live a normal life.



# HIV-Related Stigma and Discrimination: Understanding and Coping



*“ My son, Jayden, aged 5 , was born HIV positive although this was not diagnosed until he was 18 months old. I took him into our family home, in a small village in Kenya. At first, relations with the local school were wonderful and Jayden thrived there. Only the headteacher and Jayden’s, Personal class teacher, knew his status.”*



*“ Then someone broke confidentiality and told a parent that Jayden had AIDS. That parent, of course, told another and with time every parent knew. This caused such panic and hostility that we were forced to move out of the area.”*

Stigma and discrimination remain a significant challenge for people living with HIV (PLHIV) as well as those affected by the virus such as family members, sexual partners, and individuals perceived to be at risk.

## **HIV stigma**

HIV stigma is negative attitudes and beliefs about people living with HIV. For example, believing only certain groups of people get HIV, judging people who take steps to prevent getting HIV and feeling people deserve to get HIV because of their choices.

## **Self-Stigma**

Self-stigma occurs when individuals internalize the negative beliefs associated with HIV and start to apply it to themselves. This can happen not only to people living with HIV but also to those who are HIV-negative but affected such as being part of a stigmatized group. People may feel shame, guilt, or fear because of their status or association with someone who has HIV.

## **HIV Discrimination**

HIV discrimination involves treating people with HIV differently or unfairly based on their real or perceived HIV status. Discrimination occurs because of having negative attitudes and beliefs about people living with HIV.

This includes denying services, excluding people socially, or using hurtful language. Even those simply affected such as family members or caregivers may experience discrimination.

### **Common examples:**

- A health care provider refuses to treat a person living with HIV.
- Isolating a person living with HIV in community events and activities.

These actions violate human rights and worsen the impact of the epidemic by discouraging people from seeking help.

## Causes of HIV stigma and discrimination

- Myths and misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted.
- Lack of information and awareness
- Holding on to outdated beliefs.

## Effects of HIV stigma and Discrimination

- Self-stigma can lead to isolation, low self-worth, fear of testing or disclosure, and poorer health outcomes due to avoiding care.
- Stigma and discrimination create barriers to prevention, testing, and treatment fueling the spread of the HIV .
- It leads to poor emotional wellbeing and mental health of people living with HIV.

## Coping Strategies

To manage stigma and discrimination, both infected and affected individuals can:

- Stay socially and physically active.
- Join support or peer groups.
- Disclose status in safe, supportive spaces.
- Seek counseling.
- Educate others to challenge harmful myths.
- Learn more about HIV to build confidence and resilience.

By addressing stigma and discrimination together as individuals, families, and communities, we can create a more supportive environment where everyone can thrive.





## Kenya HIV & AIDS Tribunal

Kenya's HIV & AIDS Tribunal helps protect individuals from discrimination and rights violations linked to HIV. It was created under the HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 2006. The HIV & AIDS Tribunal addresses cases of HIV related stigma and discrimination. Persons living with, affected by, or at risk of HIV-including parents or guardians acting on behalf of children are eligible to file complaints. Cases involving children may be filed by parents, guardians or care givers.

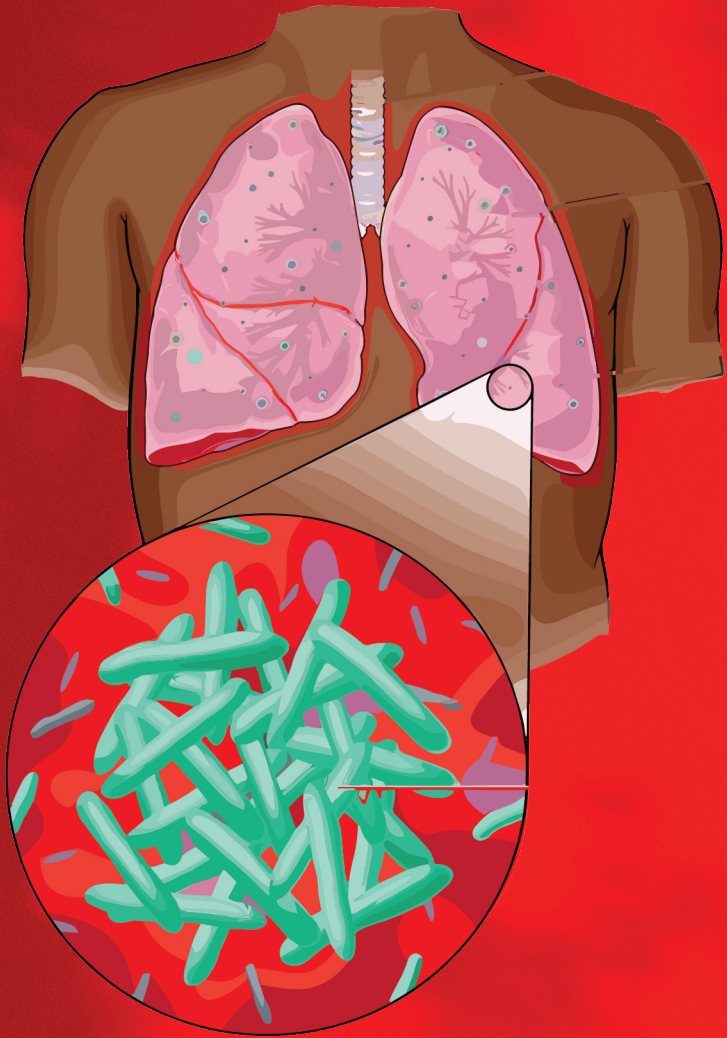


## Accessing the Tribunal

To submit a complaint, contact the Tribunal via phone at **0770430083** or Email: [hivtr@court.go.ke](mailto:hivtr@court.go.ke). Visit the office at reinsurance plaza- 12th Floor, along Aga Khan Walk and Taifa Road.

**Get in  
Touch**





# Tuberculosis (TB)



## What is TB?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an airborne disease caused by bacteria that usually affects the lungs, this is known as pulmonary TB. However, TB can also affect other parts of the body, such as the kidneys, spine, or brain. This is called extrapulmonary TB. The only parts of the body TB does not affect are the hair, teeth, and nails. TB is treatable and curable.



## How is TB Spread?

TB is spread through the air when a person with infectious TB coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. When a nearby person inhales the TB bacteria, it settles in their lungs and they can become infected.



## Symptoms of TB

Cough of any duration, chest pain, fatigue, fever, night sweats, chills, loss of appetite and weight loss. Other symptoms of TB are dependent on the parts of the body that are affected. For example, back pain for TB of the spine, headaches for TB meningitis, and urine in the blood for TB of the kidney.



*Cough of any duration*



*Fever*



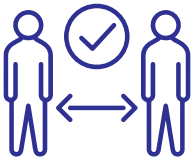
## Diagnosis and Treatment

If one is suspected of having TB, they should visit a health facility where the healthcare provider shall undertake TB tests and provide the necessary support.

- TB is treatable with antibiotics over 6–9 months.
- Multi-Drug Resistant TB: A form of TB that does not respond to standard drugs and requires longer, more intensive treatment.



## Prevention



Physical distancing



Ensuring effective air circulation in enclosed spaces.



Early diagnosis and adherence to treatment



Use of masks

**Ensure cough etiquette** - cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and throw used tissues in the trash (if you do not have a tissue, cough, or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands).

**TB preventive therapy (TPT)** - medication taken to prevent the development of active tuberculosis (TB) disease in individuals at high risk of infection. It's a crucial part of TB control efforts and helps reduce the risk of TB in high-risk groups.

## Who is at risk of getting TB.

- People who are malnourished.
- People living with HIV.
- People with cancer/ undergoing immunosuppressive therapy.
- People who have diabetes.
- People who misuse alcohol.
- People who use/inject drugs.
- Elderly people over 65 years.
- People who live in urban slums.
- Health care workers.
- Prisoners or incarcerated populations.
- People living or working in congregate settings with an index case - school going children in boarding schools, informal workers in factories/ plantations with substantial number of employees.

### **Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB)**

occurs when the bacteria that cause tuberculosis (TB) develop resistance to isoniazid and rifampin, the two most effective first-line TB treatment drugs.

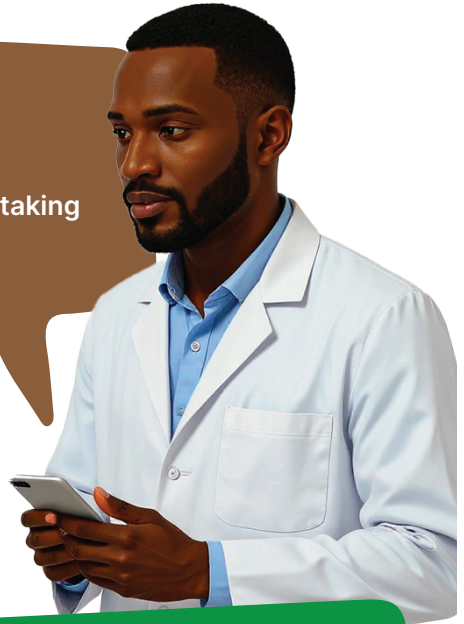
This resistance happens primarily due to inappropriate or incorrect use of TB drugs, including using single drugs, low-quality medications, or incomplete treatment courses. MDR-TB has a higher risk of treatment failure and can progress to extensive drug-resistant TB, a more severe and life-threatening form.



# Myths & Misconceptions

## MYTHS

- TB runs in families.
- Once I feel better, I can stop taking my medicine.
- You only get TB once.



## FACTS

- TB spreads through the air, not through blood or family ties.
- Always finish the full treatment to be fully cured.
- You can get TB again if you are exposed and your immunity is low.





# Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)

Sexual and reproductive health is a lifetime concern for both women and men, from infancy to old age.



## Understanding SRH

Good sexual and reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system. It implies that people can have a satisfying and safe sex life, the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so.

It is therefore important for one to have accurate information and access to safe, effective, affordable, and acceptable services on:-

- Education and awareness about sexual health.
- Prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV.
- Family planning and contraception.
- Maternal and child health.
- Cancer of the reproductive organs.



## Rights and Access

- All individuals have the right to SRH services without discrimination.
- Young people, women, and key populations must have access to tailored services.





# Sexual Practices and HIV Risk

Sexual behaviors, such as transactional sex, early sex debut, intergenerational sex, inconsistent condom use, and sexual violence, are associated with poorer health outcomes and often conceptualized as harmful sexual behaviors.

## Casual Sex and HIV Risk

Casual sex means sex outside a committed relationship. It can increase the risk of HIV, especially without protection.

## Transactional Sex and HIV Risk



Transactional sex refers to sex/sexual acts where cash, goods or benefits are exchanged for survival or for other benefits like education or social status.

Unprotected and transactional sex are major drivers of HIV in Kenya. Women and girls are most affected, with higher infection rates than men. Sex workers, young women, and men who have sex with men face higher risk.

Gender inequality and violence increase women's vulnerability to HIV.

## Group Sex and HIV Risk

Group sex involves more than one sexual partner at a time. It may happen in planned settings, like private parties, where behaviours such as sharing sex toys can increase the risk of HIV, STIs, and Hepatitis C.

Prevention efforts should include education and, where needed, engaging event organizers.

## Intergenerational Relationships and HIV Risk

Intergenerational sex involves partners with a significant age difference for example 10 years or more. This phenomenon is usually characterized by relationships between younger individuals and older adults. Due to power dynamics intergenerational sex can increase the risk of HIV, STIs, unplanned pregnancies, sexual violence, and emotional harm.

### Prevention tips

- Use a condom every time you have sex and with every partner.
- Get tested regularly and know your HIV status.
- Ask about PrEP or PEP at a health facility if you are at risk.
- Limit sexual partners and avoid transactional or intergenerational sex.
- Report sexual violence and seek help immediately.
- Talk openly about HIV and support others to stay safe.





## Erectile Dysfunction (ED) and HIV

Erectile Dysfunction (ED) is a persistent inability to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual activity. Sexual enhancement pills are used medically to assist men with erectile dysfunction. While this is a remedy, misuse can lead to health complications to an extend death. It is advisable to consult a medical expert especially if you have heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, or are on other medications.

For individuals with HIV and erectile dysfunction, counselling on safer sex practices and addressing underlying psychosocial factors like fear of transmission and body image changes.

### Remember

Consider alternatives lifestyle changes like regular exercise, stress management, reducing alcohol intake, and open communication with your partner can also improve sexual performance naturally.



## Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs)

### What are STIs?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections passed through unprotected sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) as well as through genital skin-to-skin contact.

STIs can also be transmitted by sharing sex toys or materials used during sexual intercourse.

Pregnant mothers with sexually transmitted infections can pass the infections to their unborn children during pregnancy and delivery.

Common STIs include syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes, trichomoniasis, HIV, and HPV (human papillomavirus). Some are caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites.

## Who is at risk of getting Sexually Transmitted Infections?

- Those having vaginal, anal or oral sex without a condom.
- Those with multiple sexual partners.

## How to tell if you have an STI!

Many people especially women may not show symptoms, but signs can include:

- Unusual discharge
- Pain during urination
- Ulcers in the genitals
- Genital itching, rashes, or sores
- Bleeding between periods
- Rectal pain or discharge for those who engage in anal sex

## Why testing matters?

The only way to know for sure is to get tested, many STIs are treatable if caught early.

## Get tested if you

- Had unprotected sex.
- Notice any symptoms.
- Are starting a new relationship.
- Are pregnant and suspect an infection.

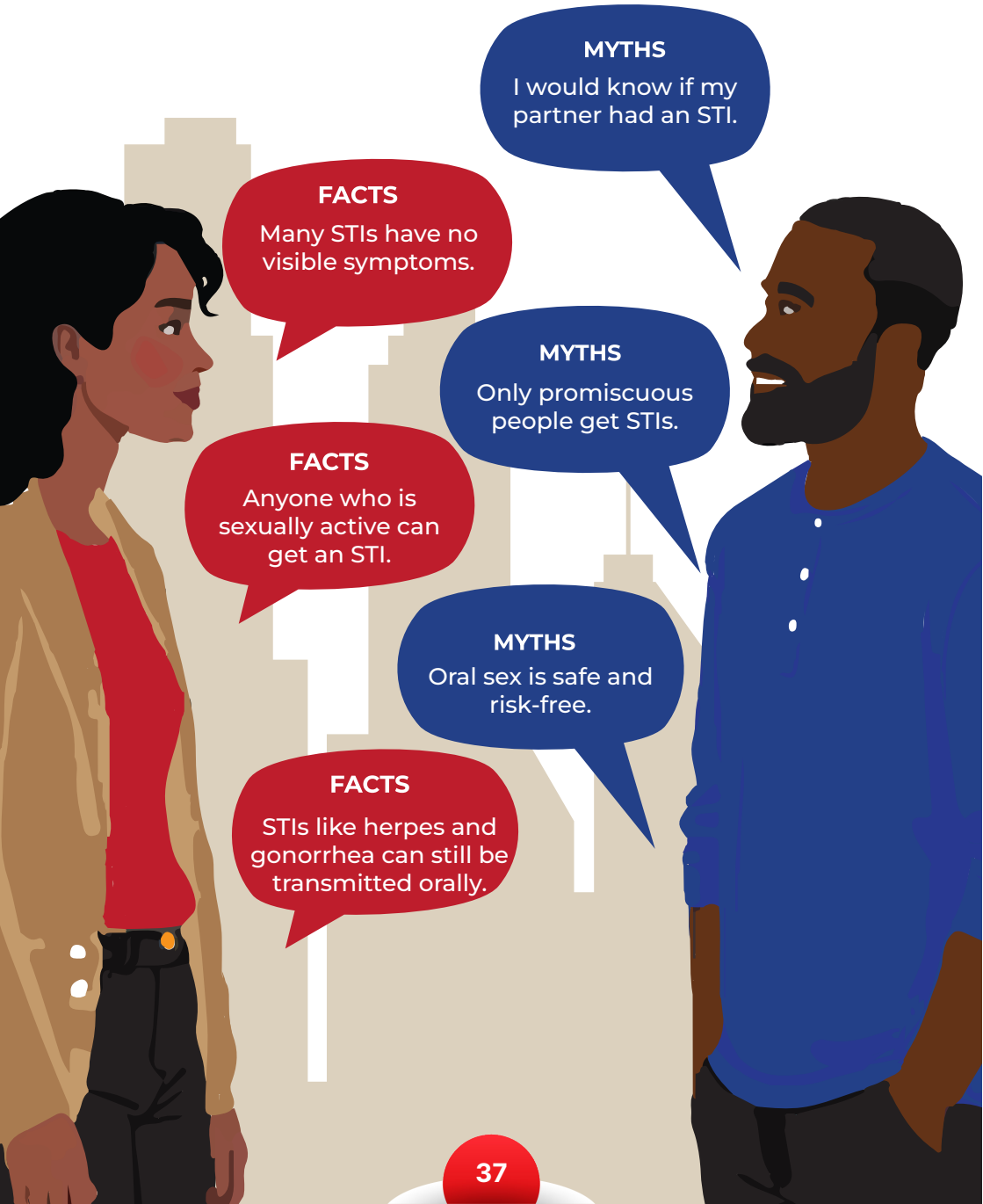
## Where to get support

Visit a government clinic, youth-friendly centre, private or NGO-run facility for more assistance.

## Prevention strategies

- Abstaining from sex.
- Using condoms and dental dams correctly and consistently every time you have penetrative sex or oral sex.
- Reducing the number of sexual partners.
- Avoid sharing Injecting drugs needles or contaminated sharp objects.
- Avoid sharing unsterilized sex toys.
- Being in a sexual relationship with one sexual partner who has been tested and has no STI's.
- Regularly testing for STIs.
- Getting vaccinated for example Hepatitis B and HPV vaccine.

## STI Myths and Misconceptions



### FACTS

Many STIs have no visible symptoms.

### FACTS

Anyone who is sexually active can get an STI.

### FACTS

STIs like herpes and gonorrhea can still be transmitted orally.

### MYTHS

I would know if my partner had an STI.

### MYTHS

Only promiscuous people get STIs.

### MYTHS

Oral sex is safe and risk-free.



# Family Planning and Contraception

## Contraception options for both men and women

Contraception Options for Women		
Hormonal Methods	How to use	Side effects
<b>Oral Contraceptives (Pills)</b>	Take one pill every day. Effectively prevent pregnancy by stopping ovulation and thickening cervical mucus.	Menstrual irregularities, weight gain, mood changes, and an increased risk of blood clots.
<b>Hormonal Implant</b>	A small device inserted under the skin that releases hormones to prevent pregnancy.	Side effects are similar to oral contraceptives but may include irregular bleeding.
<b>Injectable Contraceptives</b>	A hormone injection that is given every few months.	Irregular bleeding, weight changes, and decreased bone density with long-term use.
<b>Hormonal IUD</b>	A small device inserted into the uterus that releases hormones.	Irregular bleeding, cramping, and an increased risk of infection.
<b>Patch</b>	A sticky patch worn on the skin that releases hormones.	Menstrual irregularities, weight gain, mood changes, and an increased risk of blood clots.

## Non-Hormonal Methods: Barrier Methods

Hormonal Methods	How to use	Side effects
<b>Condoms</b> Female and Male Condoms	Protect against pregnancy and STIs when used correctly and consistently.	Side effects are minimal, but latex allergies can occur.
<b>Copper IUD</b>	A device inserted into the uterus that prevents pregnancy without hormones.	Side effects may include heavier, more painful periods
<b>Sterilization (Tubal Ligation)</b>	A surgical procedure for permanent birth control where the fallopian tubes are blocked or cut. This prevents an egg from traveling down the tube to meet sperm, thus preventing pregnancy.	While generally safe, tubal ligation does carry some risks, such as infection, bleeding, or damage to nearby organs if it is not done professionally.
<b>Natural Family Planning</b>	Methods like the rhythm method or basal body temperature tracking that aim to identify fertile periods and avoid sex during those times.	Disadvantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less effective than other methods</li> <li>• Requires consistent tracking</li> <li>• Inconsistent use</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Contraception Pills</b>	Used after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy for example Postinor 2 (P2 pills).  Emergency Contraception Pills help to prevent pregnancy when taken within 3 days after unprotected sex. The sooner they are taken, the more effective they are.	Nausea, vomiting, changes in menstrual bleeding, fatigue, headache, and breast tenderness.

Contraception Options for Men		
Hormonal Methods	How to use	Side effects
<b>Vasectomy</b>	A permanent procedure to prevent sperms from being released.	Common side effects include pain, swelling, and bruising at the site of the procedure. This is a minor issue unless it isnt done professionally

## Benefits of Family Planning

### Individual Benefits

- **Reduced risk of unintended pregnancies**

Family planning helps individuals avoid unintended pregnancies, which can lead to improved maternal and infant health outcomes.

- **Reduced risk of STIs**

Family planning education and the use of barrier methods like condoms can help reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

- **Improved reproductive health**

Family planning provides access to contraceptive methods and treatment for infertility, allowing individuals to make choices that align with their reproductive health needs.

- **Increased control over fertility**

Family planning empowers individuals to choose the number and timing of their children, giving them greater control over their reproductive lives.

- **Better health outcomes**

By preventing unintended pregnancies, family planning reduces the risk of complications associated with pregnancy and child-birth, especially in adolescents and older women.

## Family Benefits

- **Enhanced financial stability**

Family planning allows families to better plan for their financial needs, reducing the burden of raising a large family and improving their ability to save and invest.

- **Improved educational opportunities**

By planning the number of children, families invest better in education and create greater opportunities for higher learning and employment.

- **Increased opportunity for work and civic participation**

Family planning can free up time and resources for women to pursue education, employment, and civic involvement, leading to greater social and economic opportunities.

- **Better work-life balance**

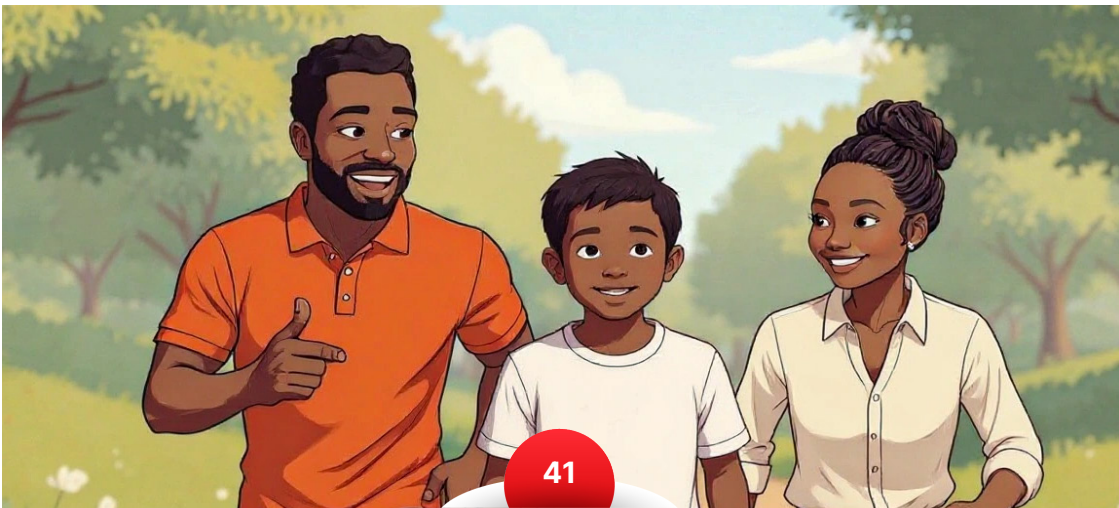
Controlling family size can improve the balance between work and family life, reducing stress and enhancing relationships within the family.

- **Stronger family bonds**

Family planning can lead to a more positive and supportive family environment, as families are less likely to be overwhelmed by the demands of raising a large number of children.

- **Improved health outcomes for mothers and children**

Spacing pregnancies and preventing unintended pregnancies can lead to healthier mothers and children, reducing the risk of complications associated with closely spaced births and maternal health issues.



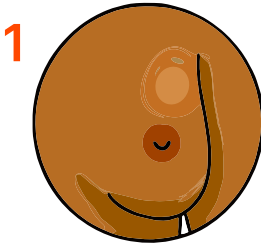


# Cancers of Reproductive Organs

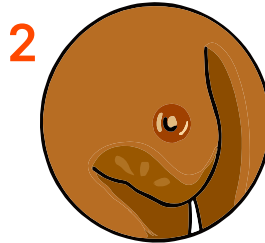
## Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is a disease where cells in the breast grow abnormally and form a lump or mass (tumor). It is one of the most common cancers in women, but men can also develop it (though rarely).

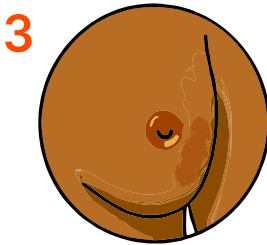
### Warning Signs to Watch For



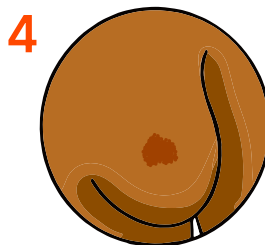
Lump



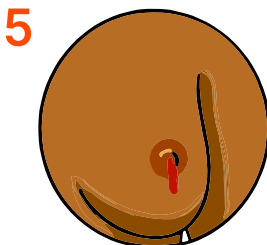
Skin dimpling



Change in skin color or texture



Change in how the nipple looks, like pulling in of the nipple



Clear or bloody fluid that leaks out of the nipple

- A new lump in the breast or underarm
- Swelling or thickening in part of the breast
- Changes in the shape or size of the breast
- Skin dimpling or redness
- Pain in the nipple or breast area
- Nipple discharge (especially if bloody)
- Nipple turning inward or changes in its appearance

Note: Not all lumps are cancerous, but they should always be checked by a health worker.

## Prevention

- Do regular self-breast exams (monthly).
- Get clinical breast exams during health checkups.
- Schedule mammograms as recommended (usually every 1–2 years starting at age 40 or earlier if at high risk).
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle: Eat well, exercise, limit alcohol, and avoid tobacco.
- Those on hormone replacement therapy or oral contraceptives should discuss with the health worker on possible side effects.
- Breastfeed your child/children, if possible.
- If you have a family history of breast cancer talk to your doctor about other ways to lower your risk.

Staying healthy throughout your life can lower your risk of developing cancer and improve your chances of surviving cancer if it occurs.

## Who Is at Risk?

- Women over 40
- Family history of breast or ovarian cancer
- History of certain non-cancerous breast diseases
- Early menstruation (before age 12) or late menopause (after 55)
- Never having children or having a first child after age 30
- Women with dense breasts.
- Previous treatment using radiation therapy.



## Screening & Detection

- **Mammogram** is an x-ray of the breast.
- **Breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)**  
A breast MRI uses magnets and radio waves to take pictures of the breast.
- **Clinical breast exam**  
A clinical breast exam is an examination by a doctor or nurse, who uses his or her hands to feel for lumps or other changes.
- **Breast self-awareness**  
Being familiar with how your breasts look and feel can help you notice symptoms such as lumps, pain, or changes in size that may be of concern.

## How to screen for breast lumps



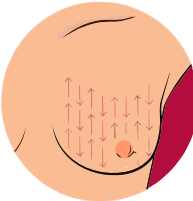
Once a month,  
2-3 days after  
periods



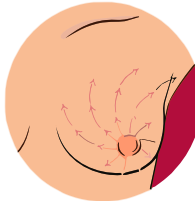
Examine breast  
and armpit with  
raised arm



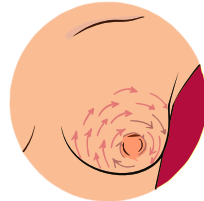
Use fingerpads with  
massage oil or  
shower gel



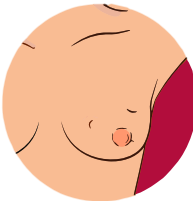
Up and Down



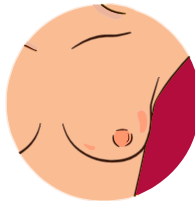
Wedges



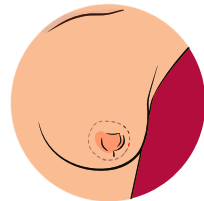
Circles



Examine breasts in the  
mirror for lumps or  
skin dimpling



Change in skin color  
or texture



Nipple deformation,  
color change or leaks  
of any fluid

## When to See a Health Worker

If you notice anything unusual in your breast, don't wait. Visit a health facility or talk to a trained provider for examination, testing, and advice.



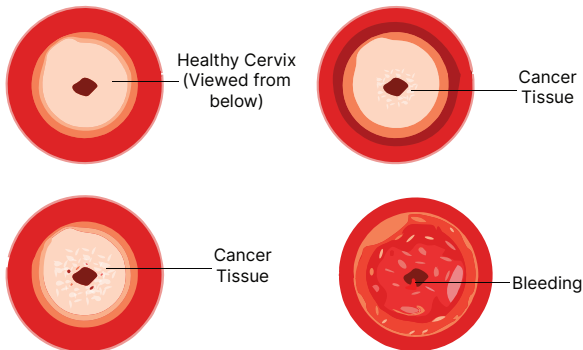
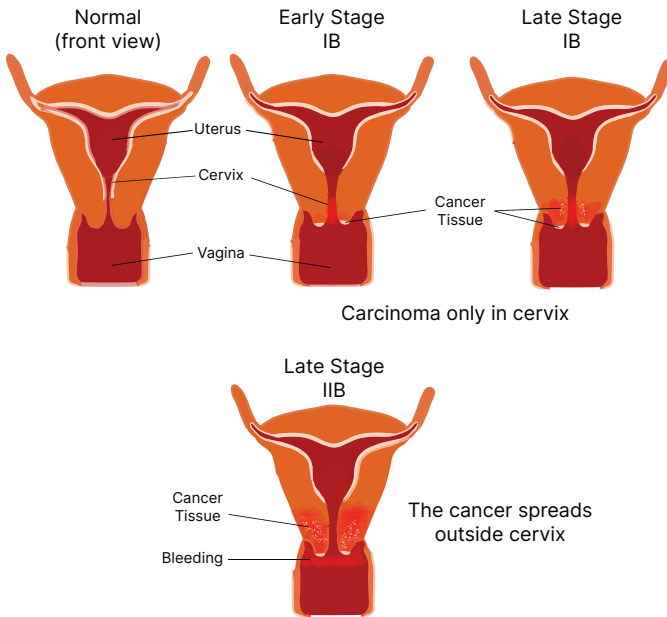
## Treatment Options

- **Surgery:** Is an operation in which doctors remove cancerous cells.
- **Chemotherapy:** Uses special medicines to shrink or kill the cancerous cells.
- **Hormonal therapy:** Blocks cancer cells from getting the hormones they need to grow.
- **Biological therapy:** Works with your body's immune system to help fight cancer cells or to control side effects from other cancer treatments.
- **Radiation therapy:** Uses high-energy rays (like x-rays) to kill the cancerous cells.

# Cervical Cancer

## What is Cervical Cancer?

Cervical cancer happens when cells in the cervix (the lower part of the uterus/womb that connects to the vagina) grows abnormally and forms a tumor. It is mainly caused certain types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a virus that spreads through sexual contact.



## Warning Signs to Watch Out For

Cervical cancer may not show symptoms in its early stages. As it progresses, you may notice:

- Abnormal vaginal bleeding (especially after sex, between periods, or after menopause)
- Unusual vaginal discharge (often watery, pink, or foul-smelling)
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Pelvic pain or lower back pain or swelling in your legs.
- Pain or bleeding after douching or pelvic exams.

If cancer has spread to nearby tissues or organs, symptoms may include:

- Difficult or painful urination, sometimes with blood in your urine.
- Diarrhea, pain or bleeding from your rectum.
- Fatigue, loss of weight and appetite.
- A general feeling of illness.

**Note:** These signs can also be caused by other conditions, so it's important to get checked.

## Prevention

- **HPV Vaccination:** Get vaccinated against HPV (recommended for girls aged 9–14 before becoming sexually active).
- **Regular Screening:** Pap smear or HPV testing helps detect changes in the cervix before they turn into cancer.
- **Safe Sex Practices:** Use condoms and limit the number of sexual partners to reduce HPV risk.
- **No Smoking:** Smoking increases the risk of cervical cancer.

## Who is at Risk?

- Women aged 30 and above.
- Women who are sexually active at an early age.
- Women with many sexual partners.
- Women living with HIV or other conditions that weaken the immune system.
- Those who have never been screened for cervical cancer.
- Women with a history of HPV infection.
- Women who smoke.

## Screening and Early Detection

- **Pap Smear Test:** Detects abnormal cell changes in the cervix.
- **HPV Test:** Checks for the virus that causes cervical cancer.
- **Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA)**

### How often to screen:

- At least once every 3 years for women aged 25–49, or as advised by a health provider.
- Women living with HIV may need more frequent screening (yearly).

### When to See a Health Care Worker

- If you have any of the warning signs mentioned
- If it has been more than 3 years since your last screening
- If you are HIV-positive and haven't had cervical cancer screening
- If you want to get the HPV vaccine or learn more about prevention

### Treatment Options

Cervical cancer can be treated, especially when detected early. Treatment depends on the stage of cancer and overall health.

### Requirements for Women Living with HIV

- **Regular and early screening:** Cervical cancer screening is recommended yearly.
- **HPV vaccination (if eligible):** Women with HIV can benefit from the HPV vaccine.
- **Adherence to ART (antiretroviral therapy):** A strong immune system helps fight HPV.
- **Timely treatment:** Prompt action if abnormal cells or cancer is detected.
- **Follow-up care:** Regular check-ups and counseling are essential.

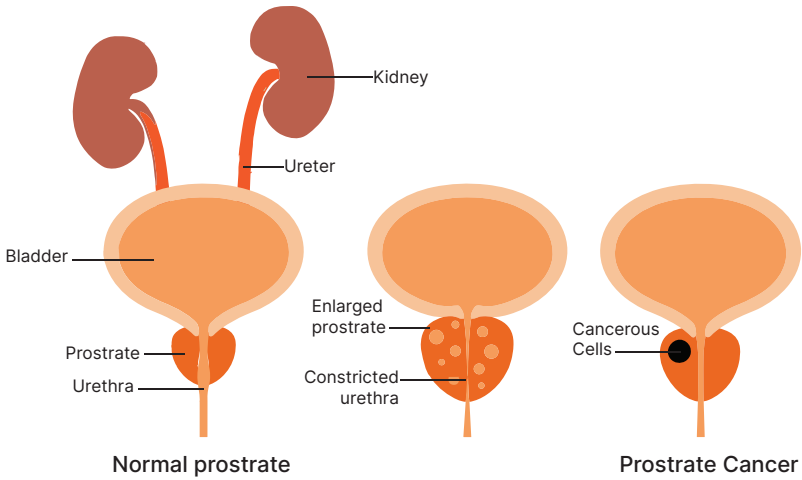
### Can cervical cancer be cured completely?

YES. Cervical cancer can be treated and cured, especially if it's detected in the early stages.

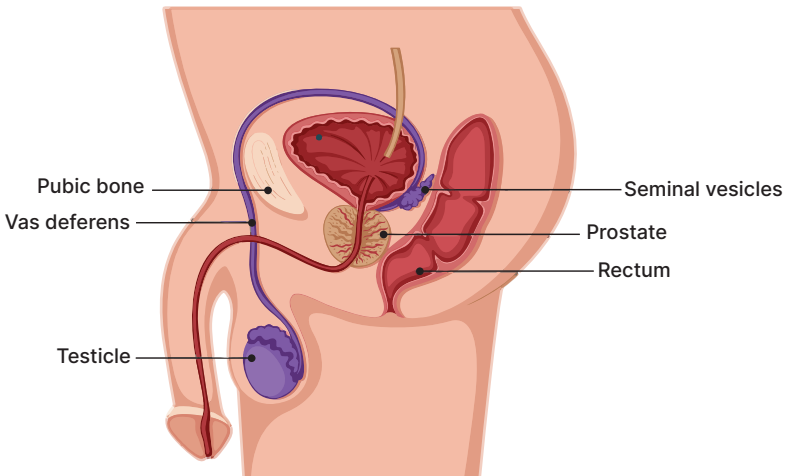
# Prostate Cancer

## What is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer is a disease that occurs when abnormal cells grow in the prostate gland, a small organ in men located below the bladder and anterior of the rectum. The prostate helps produce semen. Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers in men, especially as they grow older.



## Prostate Cancer - side view



## Warning Signs to Watch Out For

Prostate cancer often develops slowly and may not show early symptoms. However, signs to watch for include:



Difficulty and pain during urination



Frequent urination



Pain in the back, hips, or pelvis

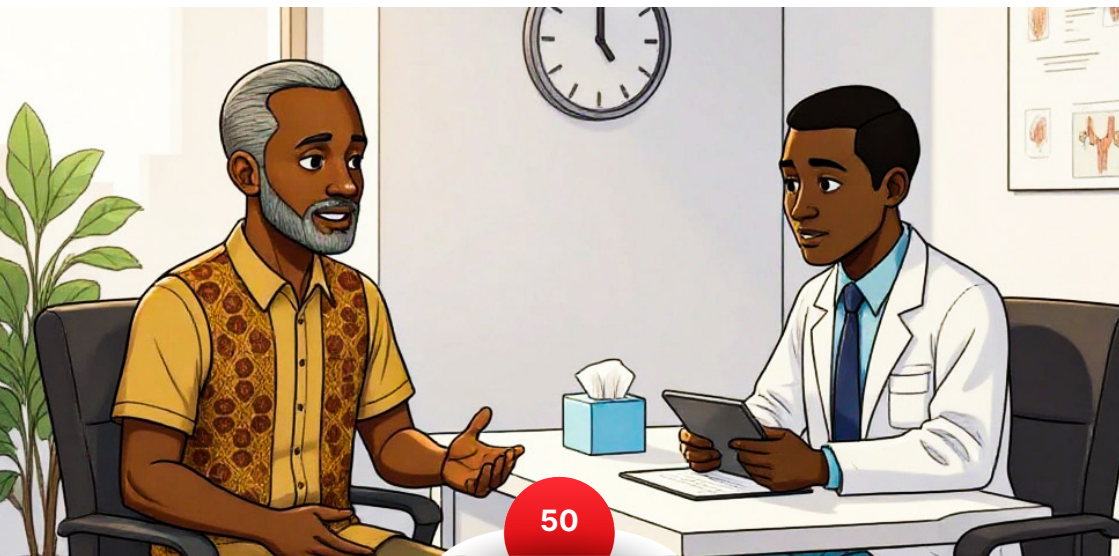


Blood in urine or semen



Erectile dysfunction

**Note:** These symptoms can also be caused by other prostate problems, such as infection or enlargement, so it's important to get checked.



## Prevention

While prostate cancer cannot always be prevented, the risk can be reduced by:

- Eating a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables
- Maintaining a healthy weight and staying physically active
- Reducing red meat and processed foods
- Avoiding tobacco and limiting alcohol intake
- Going for regular health check-ups, especially after age 40

## Who is at Risk?

Men are at higher risk if they:

- Are aged 50 years and above
- Have a family history of prostate cancer (father, brother)
- Have diets high in fat and low in fiber

## Screening and Early Detection

Early detection saves lives. Prostate cancer can often be found early through:

- **Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Test:** A blood test that checks PSA levels, which may be higher in men with prostate problems
- **Digital Rectal Exam (DRE):** A health provider feels the prostate through the rectum to check for abnormalities

## Screening is recommended:

- Starting at age 40–45 for men at high risk
- From age 50 for all other men
- Every 1–2 years, or as advised by a health provider

## When to See a Health Care Worker

Visit a clinic or hospital if:

- You experience any of the warning signs
- You are over 40 and have never had a prostate check
- You have a family history of prostate cancer
- You are living with HIV and have not been screened for prostate cancer.
- You want to learn more about prevention or screening.

## Treatment Options

Treatment depends on how early the cancer is detected, your overall health, and age. Options may include:

- **Watchful waiting or active surveillance:** For slow-growing cancers
- **Surgery:** To remove the prostate (prostatectomy)
- **Radiation therapy:** To kill cancer cells
- **Hormone therapy:** To block cancer-fueling hormones
- **Chemotherapy:** For advanced cancer
- **Palliative care:** For symptom management and quality of life in advanced cases

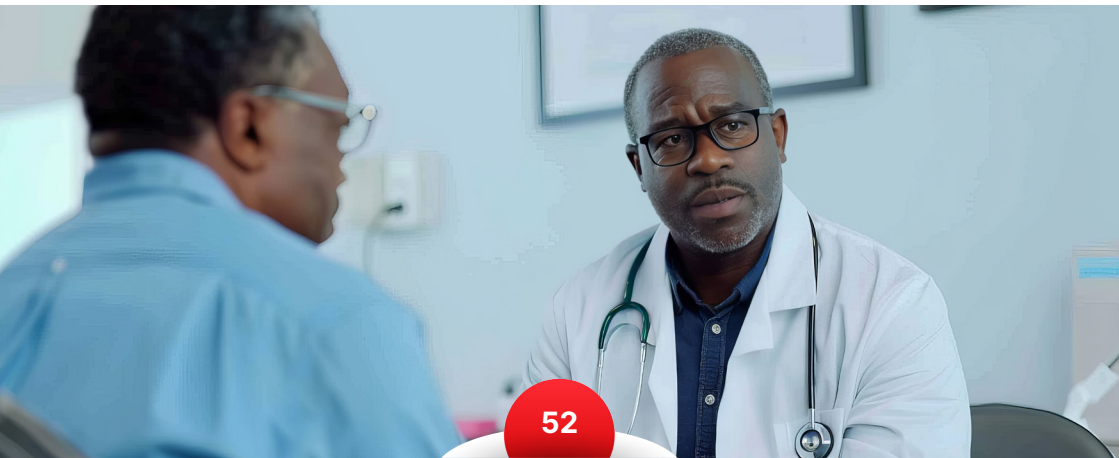
## Requirements for Men Living with HIV

More regular screening: May be needed due to increased risk of delayed diagnosis

- **ART adherence:** Maintaining a strong immune system helps improve outcomes
- **Open communication:** Discuss any symptoms or concerns early with your doctor
- **Holistic care:** Providers should coordinate HIV and cancer care to avoid drug interactions
- **Support system:** Emotional and psychological support is important during treatment

### Tip:

Prostate cancer can be treated, especially when detected early. Screening saves lives.





## Mens, Boys, Gender and Health

Many men face health challenges but are less likely to seek help due to pressure to appear strong and self-reliant. These expectations can prevent men from getting the support and care they need, whether it is for physical, mental, or emotional health.

Taking care of your health is not a weakness, it is strength. Men should feel free to talk about their struggles, go for regular check-ups, and support one another. Being a good father, partner, or friend includes being healthy and present.

Encouraging emotional openness, respectful relationships, and shared responsibility in the home helps build stronger families and communities. Men's health matters, acting today helps protect your tomorrow.





**Gender Based Violence (GBV)**



# Gender Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is any form of violence directed at an individual based on gender identity. Both children and adults can experience and be affected by violence.

## Type of Violence

**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)** – This is violence by an intimate partner or ex-partner. IPV can be physical (hitting, kicking, burning, grabbing, pinching, shoving, slapping, hair-pulling, biting), sexual (rape, assault or exploitation) psychological (causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner or children), emotional (undermining a person's sense of self-worth through constant criticism; belittling one's abilities; name-calling or other verbal abuse) and economic (maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding access to money, and/or forbidding attendance at school or employment).

THERE IS

**NO EXCUSE**

**FOR VIOLENCE**

**Domestic Violence** - Violence that occurs within the private, domestic sphere, generally between individuals who are related through blood or intimacy.

**Sexual Violence** - Sexual violence is any sexual act committed against the will of another person, either when this person does not give consent or when consent cannot be given because the person is a child. Sexual Violence can include: -

1. **Sexual harassment**
2. **Sexual Abuse/Rape**
3. **Sexual Exploitation**

**Femicide** – It's the intentional killing of girls and women because of their sex (female).

**Harmful cultural practices** – For example Female Genital Mutilation, Widow inheritance, being forced to undertake in some cultural rites during burial ceremonies among others.



**Online/Digital/Technology facilitated Violence** – This is violence that is facilitated using information and communication technology such as (mobile phones, internet, social media, email, text messaging etc). This can include: -

1. **Cyberbullying** – The sending of threatening or intimidating messages.
2. **Doxing** – The release of private or identifying information about a person to the public.
3. **Non-Consensual texting** – Sending of explicit sexual messages or photos without the recipient's consent.

## Sexual Consent

Sexual consent means agreeing to take part in any kind of sexual activity, not just penetrative vaginal or anal sex. It applies every time you have sex and it's an ongoing process, you might agree to sex earlier on and then change your mind and that's okay. You have the right to say 'no' at any time – it doesn't matter if you've had sex with your current partner before or anyone else

- If you have been a victim of violence, it's important to take steps to protect your health, safety, and rights:
- Go to a safe place and call a friend, a family member, or someone else you trust who can be with you and to provide support.
- Report the Incident: There are special police units for dealing with Sexual and Gender based Violence cases, such as the **Gender Desk at Police Stations.**
- Try to keep all evidence of rape or defilement. Don't shower or change anything until after a medical exam. Save the clothes you wear in separate paper bags, and don't touch or clean anything from where it happened.
- Get medical care as soon as you can, within 2 hours, but no later than 72 hours. Even if you don't feel pain or are injured, a medical exam can check for injuries, prevent infections or pregnancy, and collect evidence if you choose to report.



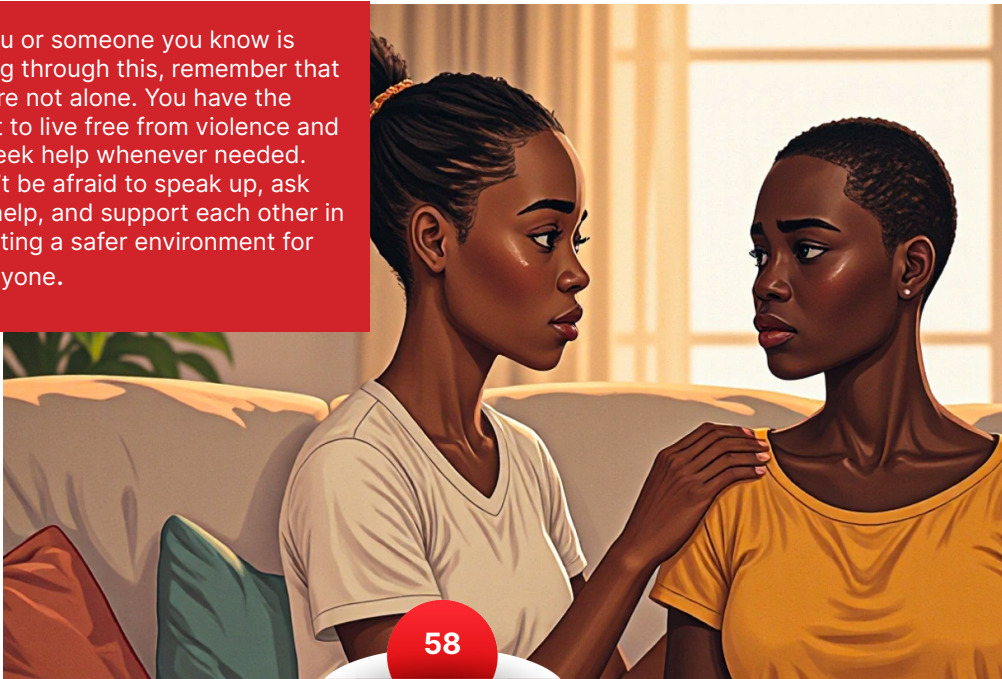
- If you suspect that you may have been drugged, inform the health care provider and request that a sample is taken. Write down as much as you can remember about what happened including a description of the assailant.
- After a sexual assault, you may have a lot of decisions to make like getting medical care, reporting it, or telling someone you trust. It's normal to have questions or worries, especially about how it might affect you or how others might react. Talking to a trained counselor can help you cope with the emotional and physical impacts of the assault.

### **Reporting Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse cases should be reported to a health facility within 72 hours for timely care and support. This ensures:

- Access to emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy.
- HIV prevention (PEP) and treatment of other sexually transmitted infections.
- Proper collection and preservation of evidence for legal action.
- Provision of psychosocial and medical support to the survivor.
- Early reporting and visiting a health facility within 72 hours can help protect your health, safety, and rights.

If you or someone you know is going through this, remember that you're not alone. You have the right to live free from violence and to seek help whenever needed. Don't be afraid to speak up, ask for help, and support each other in creating a safer environment for everyone.





# WHERE TO SEEK HELP

## SGBV services are free

**1195** - Domestic and Sexual Violence  
**1190** - LVCT Health  
**0800720501** - FIDA  
**116** - Child Abuse  
**999/ 911/ 112/ 0800722203** - Kenya  
Police  
**0900620800** - Nisikize  
**1199/999** - Kenya Redcross Society  
and Ambulance Services

## Counseling Services

**1190** - LVCT Health  
**1195** - Healthcare Assistance Kenya  
**0900620800** - Nisikize  
**1199/999** - Kenya Redcross Society  
and Ambulance Services

## Drugs and Substance Abuse

**1192** - NACADA toll free number  
**0700395395** - NMS Kenya Red Cross  
Society  
**0700460546** - MSF Ambulance

Visit the nearest health facility to be  
linked with a mental health specialist

**Get In  
Touch**



**NATIONAL SYNDemic DISEASES  
CONTROL COUNCIL**



**For more information visit**

**National Syndemic Disease Control Council**  
Maktaba Kuu Building, 1st Floor, Ngong Road, Upperhill  
P.O Box 61307-00200 Nairobi, Kenya

Phone: +254 20 2715109, +254 20 2715144  
Email: [communication@nsdcc.go.ke](mailto:communication@nsdcc.go.ke)  
Website: [www.nsdcc.go.ke](http://www.nsdcc.go.ke)