



Living a Long Life



Taking pills makes me feel weak



Drinking pills & Maintaining Confidentiality



How do I feel good about taking ARVs?



Pills And Frequency



Having babies



Alcohol & HIV



Food & Nutrition



Side Effects





## Food & Nutrition

- Having HIV or taking HIV medication doesn't mean that you have to make big changes to your diet.
- Nutrition plays an important role in the immune system and its ability to fight infection.
- A balanced diet helps you stay healthy and maintain a healthy lifestyle & good nutrition is important for everyone's health regardless of one's HIV status.
- Eating locally available and affordable foods can make you feel better, improve your body's ability to fight infection & keep your heart and bones healthy as you get older.

\*Clinician should explain what comprises a Balanced Diet



## Pills and frequency

- In the past, people living with HIV had to drink a lot of pills, but nowadays most people drink just one pill a day.
- It's important to ensure that your HIV treatment fits your routine & in that way remembering to take your medication on time, everyday is made easier.
- Generally, its going to be 1 tablet, but at some prescribed periods you may take more than 1 tablet.
- Taking your treatment each day might sound like a chore, but once it is part of the things you do daily, like brushing your teeth, or having your evening supper, you will find it can be just part of your daily routine.



## Living a Long Life

- Many people think that, even with HIV treatment, they cannot live long with HIV – this is not true! In our country, people living with HIV who are on treatment and achieve viral suppression live as long as people who are not infected.
- The key to living a long and healthy life is to take your HIV medication as prescribed. When you take your pills every day, you control the HIV in your body so that it cannot make you sick and you cannot pass it on. In this way YOU are in control, not HIV.



## **Alcohol & HIV**

- **Yes, you can still enjoy alcohol when you are living with HIV and taking treatment, as long as you are careful not to let drinking get in the way of taking your medication every day. What matters is finding a regular time to take your HIV medication when you are not going to be drinking alcohol, so that you don't forget. Most people find it easiest to take their HIV medication in the morning, when they brush their teeth or eat breakfast, because that is when you are most likely to remember.**
- **Remember, drinking alcohol has health risks whether you are living with HIV or not – you are more likely to get cancer, heart disease or have a stroke when you drink, especially when you frequently drink to get drunk. We always want you to protect your health because you are important!**



## **How do I feel good about taking ARVs?**

Let me offer you a new way to think about your HIV medication. Instead of thinking “I have to drink this pill because I have HIV,” try saying to yourself “Every time I take my HIV medication, I am taking control of my life. I am in charge.” Why do I say this? Because with HIV treatment, you are literally controlling the amount of virus in your body, making it so low, that the HIV cannot make you sick and you cannot pass it on. That is YOU controlling HIV, not HIV controlling you.



## Side effects

- Most people do not have any problems when commencing ARV's but some have indicated minor side effects such as - nausea, upset stomach, mild headache or loss of appetite.
- These are generally mild and usually go away in the first few weeks of treatment.
- Major side effects associated with taking ARVs are rare.
- You should tell your health service provider if you experience any symptoms that you think may be related to your HIV treatment.



## Having babies

Women living with HIV can safely conceive and deliver babies who are born HIV negative. To do this, you must achieve viral suppression by taking your HIV medication as prescribed. Nurses in the ANC clinic can help you plan a safe conception and pregnancy. Men who are living with HIV can also safely get their HIV negative partners pregnant if they are virally suppressed, since we know people who are virally suppressed don't pass the virus on through sex.



## **Taking pills makes me feel weak**

**Taking your HIV medication daily is an act of strength, not weakness. We do lots of things to stay strong – we might pray, exercise, or eat certain foods. Taking your ARVs is no different. It's just another way to build yourself up and stay strong so that you can live the life you want.**