



လုံခြုံနှေးကွေးသော

အချစ်

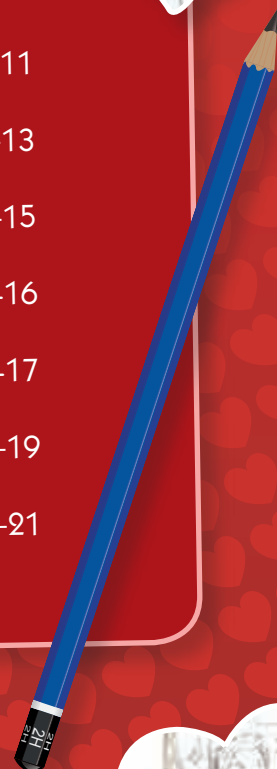
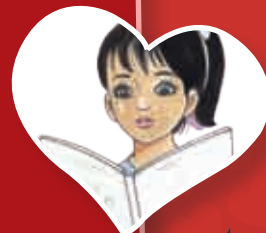
Safe Love



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In collaboration with the
 Dala medical social development team.

REALIZED BY:

Aide Médicale Internationale

FUNDED BY:

Europaid



Edito

အိမ်ထောင်အိမ်ထောင်

LOVE... LOVE...

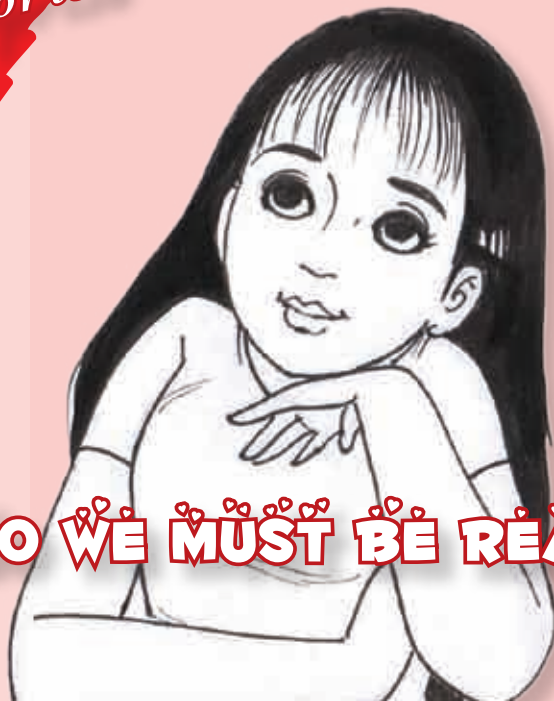
We hope...

It's a
wonderful thing

WE WAIT...

It always comes
by surprise

SO WE MUST BE READY



I remember when I was young, in Dala...

With my neighbour Aung Aung, we loved to play make-believe and pretend to be a grown-up.



We would make tea-leaf salad with sand and leaves from the garden.



My parents were impressed.



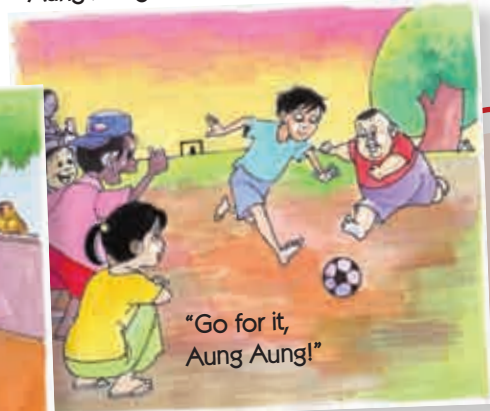
When I was 12, I loved reading the adventures of Tawthar Gyi Pyar Long.



...and then Pyar Long stops the fire and saves the dog!



Aung Aung was a great football player.



We were the best friends on earth.

Aung Aung had his own group of friends too. We became too shy to play together like we used to.



But by the time I was 14, I started to spend all my time with my girl friends.



My mother talked to me about puberty. She said it is like crossing a bridge between childhood and adulthood. She said that while making the crossing I will witness my body changing.



Voice gets deeper

Acne may appear
Hair grows in new places,
and especially pubic hair

Breasts develop



Shoulders get
broader & muscles
get bigger

Hips get wider &
waist gets smaller

Testicles & penis grow.
Ejaculation and "wet
dreams" are experienced


Periods (Menstruations)
begin

But for me, what I
feel the most is that my mind
is changing too.
I am discovering new feelings and
emotions. It is a whole new
thing to handle.



During puberty, boy and girls' reproductive organs develop. It is physiologically possible to make babies as early as 13 or 14 years old.

But making love and having babies is not only about physiology. Before considering a sexual relationship, people need to be ready, in their mind and in their life. Just because the body is ready for sex doesn't mean that the mind is.



15 October

*Today, Thant Zin made us laugh by imitating R. Zar Nee on his guitar.
All my friends think he's really nice!*

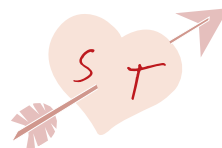


18 October

Today I saw Thant Zin in the street and he came up and talked to me. When he left, he touched my hand and smiled at me. My heart started beating wildly!

20 October

*I keep thinking about him.
I think I must be in love.*





24 October



Today Thant Zin came up to me at the school gate and offered to walk me home. When we walked past his house he told me there was nobody in and that he wanted us to be alone.

I felt like saying yes, but we hardly know each other so I refused. He started pressuring me so much to go inside that in the end I ran away.

25 October

I saw him at school today and he ignored me. He wouldn't even look at me. I don't care. In fact I now realize that I didn't really love him after all.



29 October

If I had a lover, I would like to trust him 100%. We should be able to talk openly about everything. And if one doesn't feel ready to make love, the other will understand.

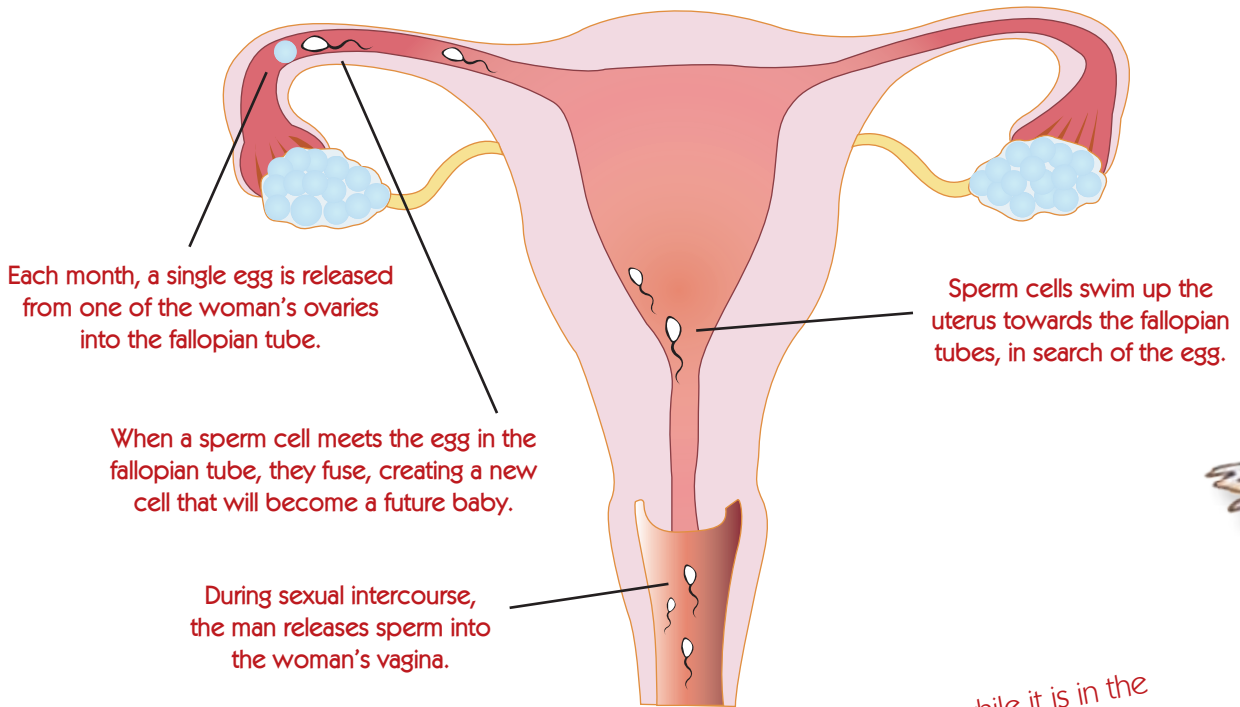


30 October

The day I will make love for the first time, I want it to be magical. I want to be ready and not to be worried about pregnancy or disease because it would spoil everything; so I will protect myself.



I've just read a book about reproductive health. There was a good chapter on conception and pregnancy. I imagine the race of the sperm cells. And the sperm meeting with the egg.



For fertilisation to occur, a sperm cell must locate and penetrate the egg while it is in the fallopian tube. Fertilisation depends on fairly specific timing (a woman is fertile for no more than 5 or 6 days per month), which is why a woman will not get pregnant every time a couple has sexual intercourse. However, it is impossible to predict for sure when there is no risk of getting pregnant. This is why techniques forecasting 'safe sex days' are not reliable. There are other methods of protecting against pregnancy that are much safer and almost 100 % reliable.



If sperm meets with the egg, fertilisation occurs.

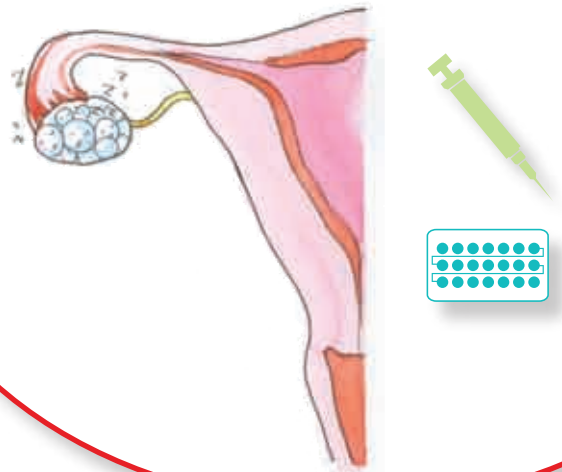
If they can't meet, pregnancy is avoided.

For example by preventing the sperm from entering the vagina. **This is the role of the condom.**



Simple!

Or by preventing the release of the egg. **This is the effect of the DEPO injection or the pill.**



There are other methods of contraception, but these two are simple and easy to obtain. Condoms have the great advantage of protecting also against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV. This is why they are strongly recommended.

The book I am reading also has a chapter on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV.



It's quite strange when you think about it: the two risks of unprotected sex are pregnancy and disease: creation and destruction.

In fact, having sex can be a matter of life or death. This is not a small thing! It is important to be well informed about STIs, let's have a look at these pages.



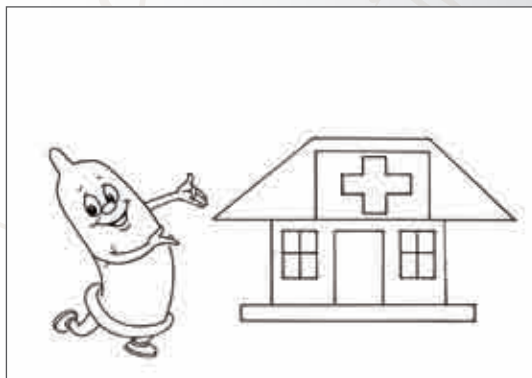
What is a sexually transmitted infection (STI)?

It is an infection that can be transferred from one person to another through sexual contact.

There are many different STIs, all with different symptoms: HIV, Hepatitis, Syphilis, Gonorrhea.... Most of these affect the genitals: people feel itchiness, inflammation or discharges. They are dangerous and some may cause infertility (inability to get a baby). HIV is a generalized disease that can lead to death. The only way to reliably diagnose HIV and other STIs is to be tested at a health center.

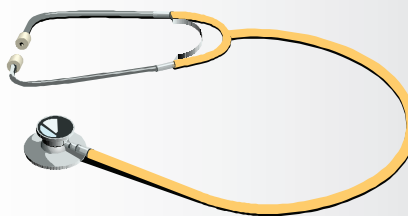
How to protect from STIs

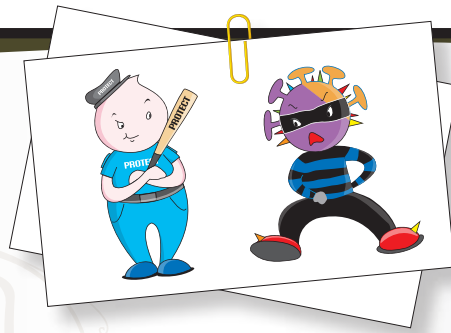
There is one simple way to be sure that you will not be at risk: use a condom every time you have sex. Condoms protect against all these infections.



What to do if I think I may have a STI

The majority of STIs can be cured; however, it is important to treat them immediately. Visit the health center or the HPC.

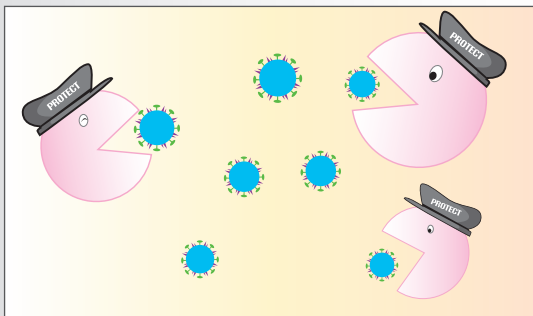




What are HIV and AIDS

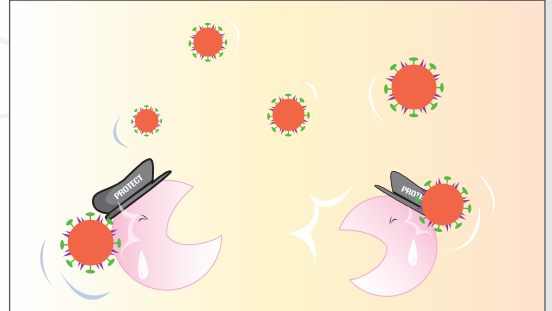
HIV is a complex virus that attacks the body in an unusual way. To better understand, let's imagine the following: Imagine a city with lots of bank robbers. There are also police in the city to prevent bank robberies. Think of the robbers as viruses and bacteria, and the police as our white blood cells. The banks look after our money, and you can imagine the money to be our good health.

One day a new robber appears in the city, called HIV. Instead of attacking the banks, he attacks the police. Eventually, too many policemen have been killed and the banks are vulnerable to attack. Once this happens, all the other robbers start robbing the banks and as there is nobody to stop them, they steal all the money, robbing us of our good health.

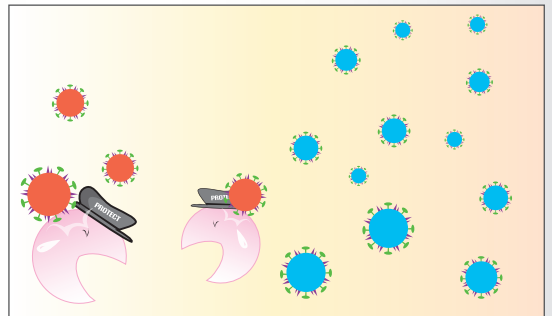


Diseases are caused by microscopic organisms, known as viruses or bacteria,

which attack the body. The body defends itself by sending white blood cells to fight the invading microbes.



HIV is a virus that directly attacks the body's white blood cells. Initially, there is no visible change: enough cells remain to fend off other diseases or infections. The person has HIV but is healthy.



But eventually the number of white blood cells becomes so low that the body has no defence against attacks from other viruses and bacteria, and the person starts catching all the diseases.

HIV: A person infected by HIV means he has the virus in his blood.





AIDS: When the defences of this person become too low he will start getting sick. It is called AIDS.

It may take months or years before a person with HIV develops AIDS. During this time he may appear healthy, but he can transmit the disease to other people.

We must always protect ourselves when having sex, even with people that appear healthy.

It is important to take a HIV test if in any doubt, because of the lack of symptoms in the early stages of the virus.

How HIV is transmitted

In an infected person, the HIV virus is present in 4 fluids: blood, semen (sperm), vaginal fluids and breast milk.

To spread from one person to another, the virus must enter the bloodstream of the other person. This can only happen in 3 ways:

- Through sexual intercourse
- Through blood exposure
- From mother to baby

How to protect from HIV

Unprotected sex is one of the major ways the virus has spread. There is a risk of transmission when the semen or vaginal fluid of one person gets in contact with the mucous membranes (genital parts, anus or mouth) of another person. This risk can be prevented by using a condom.

You cannot get HIV by holding hands, kissing, caressing or cuddling.

Transmission through contaminated blood also exists. This most often happens with the sharing of needles. Drug users and health workers must be made aware: a new needle must be used for any injection.

Mothers with HIV can reduce the risk of transmission to their babies by having an HIV test and receiving antiretroviral medication before and after delivery.





In 1981, the first cases of AIDS were identified. At this time, many considered AIDS to be a disease restricted to homosexuals and drug users, and people were often ignorant of the modes of transmission of this newly discovered syndrome.



Prof. Montagnier, first discoverer of the HIV virus

Quickly, new cases were reported and the number of AIDS sufferers continued to rise dramatically. In 1984, HIV, the virus responsible for AIDS, was also identified.



In 1986, 85 countries reported cases of AIDS, causing some countries to launch awareness campaigns to promote safer sexual behaviour.

Throughout the 90's, the number of infected people dramatically exploded. The prevalence of the disease and the number of high profile sufferers finally convinced Governments and the Media of the necessity to work together against AIDS, to promote safe sexual behaviour and to support victims. Another positive advance at this time was the development of antiretroviral drugs, enabling sufferers to live longer and with a better quality of life.



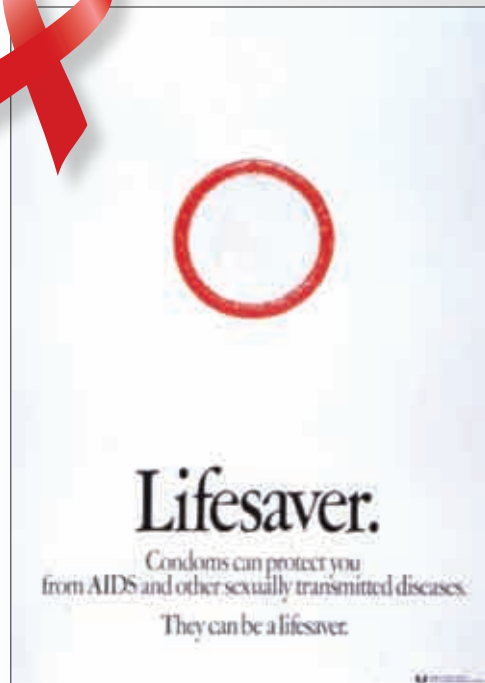
Nowadays, AIDS is a global concern. More than 30 million people live with HIV. Every hour, more than 200 people die from AIDS and even more contract HIV. There is still no hope in sight of a vaccination. The only way to reduce the epidemic is by adopting safe sexual behaviour. More than ever, condom use and testing are crucial.





Princess Diana calling for solidarity
with AIDS victims

The Red Ribbon is the symbol for solidarity with people living with HIV and it unites the people in the common fight against this disease. Each year the 1st of December is the day dedicated to raising awareness on the AIDS pandemic.



One day



Mmm... maybe I should go to the doctor.



No, both teams are full.

Hi, can I play?



?



Can I sit here?

Er... no, it's taken.



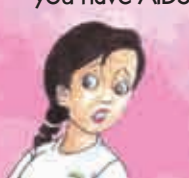
Thida, here's the book you asked for.

Umm, thanks... I don't need it anymore.



Hey, what's wrong with everyone?

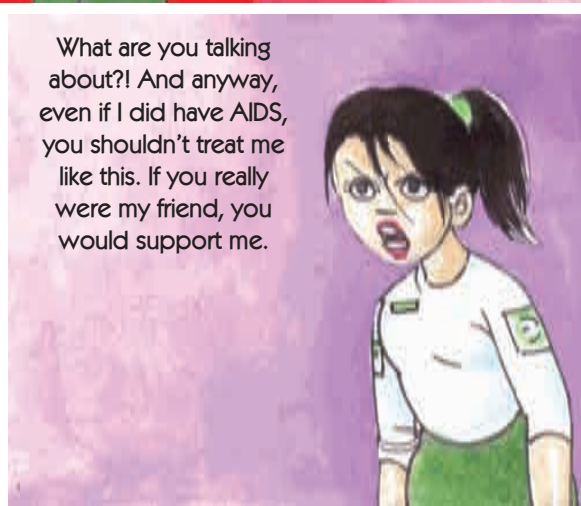
You know, this rash on your arm... people say you have AIDS.



AIDS !



What are you talking about?! And anyway, even if I did have AIDS, you shouldn't treat me like this. If you really were my friend, you would support me.





Tell me, which of these ways may transmit HIV?



Er... none.

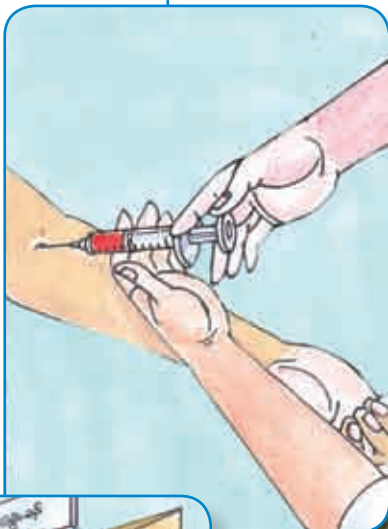


I'm sorry, I reacted badly. If you need my help I am here.



I was worried about the way my friends reacted, and I decided to go to the Health Promotion Center to see a doctor about my rash.

This is not HIV, just a form of eczema. Use this cream and it will disappear in a few days. If you want more information about STIs and HIV, our counselor can answer all your questions. And if you want to be reassured, we can test you. It is quick and easy.



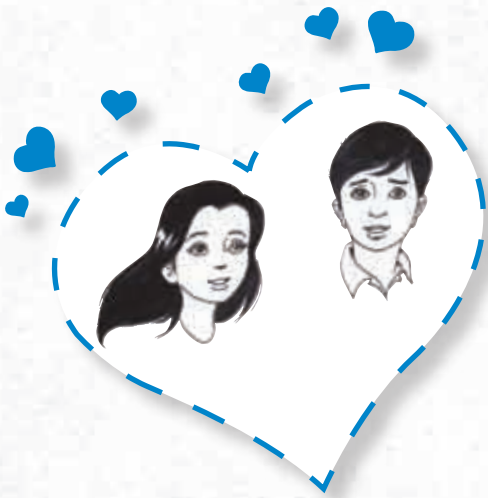
The HPC



Thank you doctor. Everyone has been so kind to me and I've been given plenty of information.

You know, one day I would like to do something to contribute to the fight against these diseases. I could share the knowledge I have gained, to increase people's awareness.





Two years later,
I found a job in Yangon and
decided to move to Saik Kan township.
I met my new neighbours, and couldn't
believe it when I found out that Aung Aung
lived in the same street!

We hadn't seen each other for a long time,
but our feelings for each other came back
immediately.

We met often. He was very gentle, funny and
attentive towards me. I soon knew that he was
the One.

I wanted to make him happy and felt he wanted
to make me happy too. So we talked about these
important things that come with love.

We talked openly about family planning and how
best to avoid having babies before we are ready.
We talked about our dreams for the future, about
how to protect each other and care for each other.

Love is a wonderful thing.

We hope it, we wait for it, but it always comes by surprise.

So we should be ready... ready to talk about all the important things that come with love.

That's why I decided to write my story. I wanted to share what I had learned through my experience, hoping that it could be helpful to you.

While writing I had one wish: that lovers dare speaking openly together.

Love is care and sharing.

So take care of the other.

And share your concerns.



At school, two girls had to stop studying after getting pregnant. It's a pity they did not use contraception such as the Pill or condoms, don't you think?



I attended a peer education session, and I learned lots of important things.



When I said to my brother I had fallen in love, he gave me a condom! I was so surprised! But it's very kind of him don't you think?



Love is about taking care of each other. If we both have a test, we will be sure not to harm each other.



Really? It sounds interesting; I would like to know too.





အိမ်ထောင်ရေး

When I said to my friends I was writing my story about love, they started asking me questions and I would like to share some of these with you.

I have a boyfriend but feel I am not ready to have sex yet. What shall I do?

Talking frankly with your boyfriend is important. This will give you some insight into his attitudes towards sex. If he loves you and respects your wishes, he will accept the situation and wait until you are ready. If he won't, you must consider whether he is the right person for you at this time in your life.

It may help you both to avoid situations or environments that promote intimacy. You could meet in public places where you are not alone so you can avoid any difficult or tempting situations.

At what point in our relationship should I speak about intimate subjects with my lover?

After you have taken some time to know each other, you may want to start talking more openly about intimate subjects. If you think that you may have sex for the first time soon, then it's time to let the other know about your ideas regarding protection during sex. Remember, always use a condom.

I feel shy about buying condoms and scared someone in my family might find them.

You cannot afford to be shy about these subjects because the risks involved are so high.

You may feel a little embarrassed today, but tomorrow how will you feel if your girlfriend becomes pregnant or if you get sick? Remember, the salesperson sells condoms all the time, and will not take notice of what you are buying!



If I talk to my girlfriend about condoms, she might think I see sex workers.

If you explain to your girlfriend that you would like to use a condom to protect her against pregnancy, she will probably appreciate this as a sign of respect.

What are the signs that should make me worry about having HIV?

If you are asking yourself this question, it means you already have doubts about a possible exposure to risks of contamination. Do not wait: visit the HPC where trained people can answer your questions, and where you can be tested.

Why should I get tested?

If you have any doubts, ask for an HIV test at your health clinic. It is very important to know your status, both for you and for your partner.

If the test is negative, you will feel reassured and the counsellor can advise you on the best ways to protect yourself in future.

If you are positive, the sooner you know it, the better you can get treatment and lifestyle counselling that will help you live better and longer. You will also be better able to protect your partner.

If I have more questions in the future, where can I get answers?

In the Health Promotion Centre, professional counsellors are available to answer all your questions and advise you.





Not For Sale

