

Export *ADVOCATE*

Uniting the world against AIDS

I was 17 when my aunt died. I watched the disease take her life before it killed her. I did not mourn my aunt's physical death. I mourned my aunt when her spirit died. AIDS took my aunt, my cousin and his girlfriend, leaving their child orphaned. AIDS took my uncle, my dad's only brother. Fourteen percent of my country's adult population is said to be living with AIDS. But if you ask, it's never AIDS that those infected die from. They die from tuberculosis or other opportunistic infections.

HIV infection carries a stigma. AIDS brings to light behaviors that are considered socially unacceptable or immoral for all to see and judge!

People living with the virus are frequently subjected to discrimination and human rights abuses. They lose their jobs, they are rejected by family and friends, and some are killed.

Do you know your status?

Last week, a guy I knew died from AIDS. A shiver ran down my spine like it always does when I hear of an AIDS case or an AIDS related death. Talking to a friend it hit me for the first time why it is important to get tested. This guy, that I had known, had been in denial about his disease. His doctor asked him if he wanted to live. He said he did. But it was too late.

By the time he agreed to be tested and

acknowledged his positive status, the virus had already taken its toll on his immune system. He didn't live much longer. The drugs, the *antiretrovirals*, were not able to prolong his life and sustain the beating his already weakened immune system had endured. If he had been tested sooner, if he had known his status, he could have lived a longer life.

When you get tested, and you do not have the disease, you can take measures to protect yourself. It's like a new lease on life. If you are HIV positive, you can take measures to manage the disease and lead a longer, more productive life.

GOOD LIFESTYLE HABITS IN A WORLD FULL OF CHOICES

FIT FOR LIFE

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Exercise works the same way. Taking that first step can be hard. Remember, it's never too late. You can always improve your level of fitness.

Did you know ...? Taking a daily walk or following a simple exercise routine a few times a week helps your immune system fight off simple bacterial and viral infections? Physical activity may help by flushing bacteria out from the lungs (decreasing the chance of a cold, flu, or other airborne illness) and may flush out carcinogens (cancer causing cells) by increasing waste output, such as urine and sweat! Physical activity is also responsible for sending antibodies and white blood cells (the body's defense cells) through the body at a quicker rate. The increased rate of circulating blood may trigger the release of hormones that "warn" immune cells of intruding bacteria or viruses. Also, the temporary elevation of body temperature may inhibit bacterial growth, allowing the body to fight the infection more effectively. Finally, exercise slows down the release of stress-related hormones, stress increases the chance of illness, so physical activity could reverse this factor. As with most things, moderation is key; heavy, long-term exercise (such as marathon running and intense gym training could actually decrease the amount of white blood cells circulating through the body and increase the presence of stress-related hormones.

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007165.htm>

DELICIOUS AND NUTRITIOUS

Smoothies are a quick and nutritious way of boosting your immunity. There is no restriction to what or how much you can add to a smoothie. You could add a multivitamin supplement, herbs, herbal teas, and spices such as tumeric etc. So be creative and be sure to include some of your vital fruit and vegetable servings for the day.

This smoothie is packed with vitamins

A and C and folate, all of which boost the immune system.

- 1/2 cup milk or soy or rice beverage
- 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
- 1/2 cup each of your favorite fruit, frozen (e.g., organic strawberries, papaya, mango, pineapple)
- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup frozen blueberries
- 1 tbsp. flax oil or 2 tbsp. flaxseed meal (fiber steadies the absorption of

carbohydrates and contributes to a steadier blood sugar. For additional fiber, if you don't mind an even grainier texture, add 1 tbsp. or more of oat bran.)
4 ice cubes, slightly crushed (optional)

Combine all the ingredients and blend until smooth. Serve immediately after blending while the mixture still has a bubbly milkshake-like consistency.



KNOW, PREVENT, CARE, CURE.

MEET AN EXTRAORDINARY COALITION OF AIDS ACTIVISTS WHO HAVE COME TOGETHER TO RAISE VITAL AWARENESS AND ADDRESS THE DESTRUCTIVE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH HIV/AIDS.

www.weallhaveaids.com

AIDS is the deadliest epidemic in human history. It has claimed more than 25 million lives around the world including 500,000 Americans since its first report approximately 25 years ago.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) damages the immune system progressively destroying the body's ability to fight infections and certain cancers. People can have HIV for many years without getting sick or even knowing it. HIV has many stages. The stage of HIV disease when the immune system gets very weak is referred to as **AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)**

Acquired: the disease is not hereditary; it develops from contact with HIV

Immunodeficiency: the disease is characterized by a weakening of the immune system

Syndrome: refers to a group of symptoms that collectively indicate or characterize a disease

HIV may be passed from one person to another when infected blood, semen or vaginal secretions come in contact with an uninfected person's broken skin or mucous membranes

Stigma and discrimination constitute one of the greatest barriers to dealing with the epidemic. They discourage governments from acknowledging or taking timely action against AIDS. They deter individuals from finding out about their HIV status. And they inhibit those who know they are infected from sharing their diagnosis and taking action to protect others and from seeking treatment and care for themselves.

For more information:

http://www.unaids.org/en/issues/prevention_treatment/stigma.asp

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/aa/protection.htm>

MOBILE - HIV / AIDS RESOURCES

South Alabama CARES
2054 Dauphin Street
(251) 471-5277

USA Medical Center Hospital
2451 Fillingim St
(251) 471-7000

Mobile County Health Dept.
251 North Bayou Street,
(251)690-8158

Franklin Primary Health Center
1303 Dr Martin L King Jr. Ave
(251) 432-4117

Mostellar Medical Clinic
12701 Padgett Switch Road
(251) 824-2174

Victory Health Partners
3750 Professional Parkway
(251) 460-0999

Disclaimer

It is not the intention of the Center for Healthy Communities EXPORT Center to provide specific medical advice, but rather to provide readers with information to better understand their health. Specific medical advice will not be provided, and readers are urged to consult with a qualified physician for diagnosis and for answers to personal questions.



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