

# Living Positively with HIV



**Healthy Mind and  
Healthy Body**

## ***What is this booklet for***

This booklet gives basic information about nutrition and tips for how to stay healthy and live longer when you are living with HIV.

## ***What is Positive Living and why should I care?***

Positive Living means taking care of your health and body when you have HIV. A person with HIV can live a healthy, normal and productive life when they practice Positive Living.

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## *Why is it important to stay active and exercise?*



Staying active makes you feel happier, helps you sleep better, increases your appetite, and reduces stress. Activity also keeps your body strong so it can fight disease and allow you to carry on with your day-to-day activities.

You can stay active by playing sports, gardening, dancing, and continuing with daily house chores.

See a health worker if you become too tired and weak to do your daily activities.

**YOUR BODY NEEDS DAILY  
ACTIVITY TO STAY HEALTHY  
AND STRONG.**

## How much sleep and rest do I need?



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Although each person is different, it is important for all HIV-infected people to get plenty of rest to fight illness and remain healthy. When you are tired, your body can become weak so you are more likely to get sick. **Try to sleep 8 hours each night so that you can feel strong during the day. Always rest when you feel tired so that your body can become strong again.**

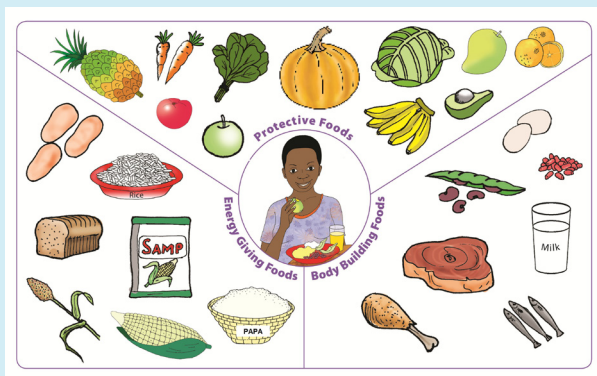
If you are tired, find someone to help you with household activities and duties so that you do not become too weak. Or try to take a short break or rest during the day so your body can recover and you can continue with your work.

### **Avoid Stress:**

- Do not force yourself to work when you are tired.
- Do not commit yourself with things that you will not be able to do or achieve.
- Share your problems with someone you trust.

**A PERSON WITH HIV NEEDS  
PLENTY OF SLEEP AND  
REST TO STAY HEALTHY  
AND STRONG.**

## Why should I eat a balanced diet?



A balanced diet gives you strength, energy and protection from illnesses. When you are taking medication your body needs extra nutrients and minerals. A healthy diet can make your HIV treatment like ARVs, INH and Cotrimoxazole more effective.

A complete balanced diet includes:

**Body-building foods** such as meat, beans, peas, fish, and eggs.

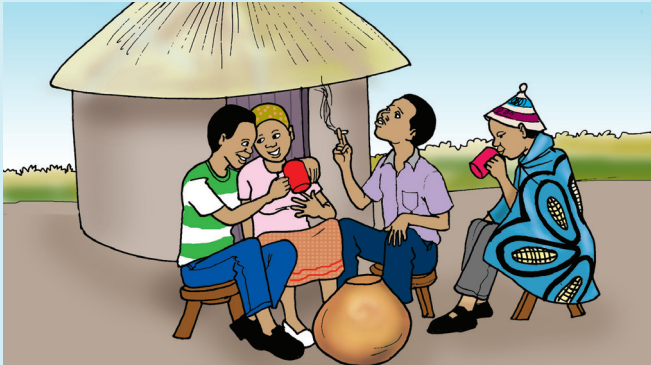
**Energy-giving foods** such as rice, papa, bread and potatoes.

**Protective foods** like fruits and vegetables.

**A BALANCED DIET GIVES  
YOU STRENGTH, ENERGY,  
AND PROTECTION FROM  
ILLNESSES.**

It is also important to **drink lots of clean, safe water.**

## ***Why is it important to avoid alcohol and drugs?***



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Alcohol and drugs make your immune system weaker, which allows HIV to multiply in your body. They can weaken your body by making it harder to get vitamins and minerals from the food you eat. Abusing alcohol and drugs also make your medicine like ARVs, INH and Cotrimoxazole less effective which can make side effects worse.

**When you use alcohol and drugs, it's harder to remember to live positively. You may stop taking ARV's or using condoms.**

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS CAN BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH AND MAKE IT HARD TO LIVE POSITIVELY. AVOID ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY AND STRONG.**

## *Why is it important to find a support system?*



A support system allows you to share your worries and relieve stress. You can learn ideas on how to cope with your HIV status and manage your symptoms and treatment. The members can also share how they overcame some of the same challenges you might be facing.

**Remember, you are not alone; there are people in your community, workplace, church or health facility who can help and support you.**

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIND A SUPPORT SYSTEM TO HELP YOU COPE WITH CHALLENGES YOU WILL FACE SO YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY AND STRONG.**

Support group members can help each other. For example, if you are sick, need food to eat or need someone to watch your children.

## ***Glossary of Terms:***

**AIDS:** Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

**ARVs** (antiretroviral): a combination of drugs that slow HIV from reproducing by protecting CD4 cells in the immune system.

**Balanced diet:** a diet that has a variety of food, so you can have all the right nutrients.

**Cotrimoxazole:** the group of the drugs that Bactrim belongs to (people who are allergic to Bactrim have other options).

**Drug:** any substance that is not given to you by a health worker, such as alcohol, cigarettes, or herbs (dagga).

**HIV:** Human Immunodeficiency Virus, the virus which causes AIDS

**INH (Isoniazid):** medication used in prevention and treatment of tuberculosis (TB).

**Support group:** a group of people who meet regularly to discuss how they are living positively with HIV.

### **Where can I get more information?**

All public health facilities and private health facilities.

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## Tips for Positive Living



Drink safe, clean water



Go for routine checkups and get medical treatment



Eat healthy, balanced diet



Stay active



Wash hands regularly



Get enough rest



Adhere to medication given to you by a health worker



Avoid drugs and alcohol



Keep your counselling appointments



Practice safer sex



Go for PMTCT services



Join a support group

**REMEMBER: A PERSON WHO IS HIV-INFECTED CAN HAVE A NORMAL, PRODUCTIVE AND HEALTHY LIFE WHEN THEY PRACTICE POSITIVE LIVING.**



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