

# The HIV/Aids disease

## What we think!

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### What do you know about HIV/Aids?

**Kerubo:** It is a disease that has killed over a million people in Kenya and it occurs everywhere in the world. It happens when a woman infected by Aids, breast-feeds a child who then gets the disease.

**Wallace:** It is a killer disease. I have seen people dying but I do not know the cause of that bad disease.

**Maureen:** Aids is a disease. You get skinny and look very weak. In school, no one ever reveals they have such a disease because other pupils will know. Those who have it can infect others.

**Muturi:** (shys off at first) It is a sickness which kills people. Actually people get very sick.

**Murugi:** (surprised) It is a bad sickness. It makes people thin and weak. (Shyly) You can get the disease if a bad person rapes you.

**Kinyua:** (Looking knowledgeable) Aids is a killer disease which kills many people. It can occur when someone uses a razor blade that has been used by someone who has the disease.

### Have you ever met anyone who suffers from the disease?

**Kerubo:** I don't know anyone but I saw one on the TV. She was crying and looked skinny. She also looked scared.

**Wallace:** (after some thought) Yes! In the year 2000, I saw another woman. Her children were my friends and they told me their mother was suffering from Aids. We went to visit them and they started crying. Their mother was in bed and she told me to be praying for her.

**Maureen:** I saw someone on the TV and he said you can't get HIV/Aids from mosquitoes. He said one should never get Aids.

**Muturi:** I saw someone on telly and in the newspaper. It looked as if they were feeling pain somewhere and they were tired.

**Murugi:** I saw a weak woman on TV. She also looked thin.

**Kinyua:** I have never seen someone with the sickness.

### Are you scared of the disease? Why?

**Kerubo:** (not amused) I am very scared of Aids. It is a horrible disease. I have this image of a boy who is naked and skinny, without food, crying because he is sick. If parents have it, they would

die and leave their children.

**Wallace:** They have been saying that many people die from the disease. It is very scaring because it can kill you. It is different from malaria.

**Maureen:** I fear HIV/Aids because those suffering from it look weak.

**Muturi:** I feel sad because when you get the disease you just die.

**Murugi:** I fear HIV/Aids because it means that if you get it, you will be sick and therefore not be able to go to school. I feel very sorry for people with the disease.

**Kinyua:** I am afraid because getting the disease means that you die.



Kerubo



Muturi



Wallace



Murugi



Maureen



Kinyua

How should we treat Aids patients?

**Kerubo:** (touched) we should treat them with a lot of politeness. We should try to help them when they need some assistance. They should also eat good food.

**Wallace:** We should help to wash their clothes and really pray for them.

**Maureen:** (pondering) We should not chase them away but treat them well. We should not laugh at them but take them to hospital for treatment.

**Muturi:** We should take them to hospital and give them medicine. We should treat them nicely.

**Murugi:** We should live with them but

### Facts on HIV/AIDS

HIV/Aids is a disease that can infect anybody. 'HIV' stands for Human Immune-deficiency Virus while Aids stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

People with the HIV virus look normal and healthy. But when their body immune system has been weakened by the virus, they suffer from fully blown Aids.

HIV/Aids is not transmitted through casual contact like hand shakes.

The virus lives in blood and other body fluids that contain blood or white blood cells. People can get HIV/Aids through having sex with an HIV-infected person or by sharing drug injection equipment (e.g needles), or being accidentally stuck by needles or sharp objects contaminated with infected blood.

People can also get it through infected blood used in transfusion during childbirth or when they are anaemic. The virus can also be passed from mother to child through breast-feeding, if the mother is infected. It can also be caused by transplanted organs (e.g kidney) from infected donors.

When you test HIV-positive, it means that your body has been infected by the human immunodeficiency virus-and that you are capable of transmitting it to others. While the virus itself is not a disease, it progressively damages the body's immune system. This puts you at risk for developing illnesses you wouldn't otherwise get.

So far there is no cure. Therefore, it is important that we avoid infection from this deadly disease. We should also treat those who have been infected humanly and kindly.

### Can it be cured and how can we prevent it?

**Kerubo:** I do not know whether the disease can be cured.

**Wallace:** A friend of mine told me that it can't be cured. If you eat healthy food and remain strong, you cannot get HIV/Aids.

**Maureen:** The disease has no cure.

(Looking worried) I don't know how it can be prevented!

**Muturi:** (seems unsure) I do not know how it can be cured or prevented.

**Murugi:** It cannot be cured. So you should take care of yourself and not do bad manners.

**Kinyua:** It cannot be cured.