Positive Health

Neil M. Orr (MA Psych).

There are only two kinds of people in Africa:
Those infected with HIV and those affected by it.

If you are infected this book is for you.

If you are not infected, this book is for a friend, loved one or a colleague.
A word from the author

I heard the word ‘AIDS’ for the first time in 1986. I also heard the words ‘deadly’, ‘hopeless’, and ‘victim’ at the same time. For the next 15 years I studied and researched AIDS. Why? Probably because I believed that Nature never creates obstacles without solutions.

At first, I studied the mental-emotional aspects, and how these affect the body’s response to HIV. I obtained my Master’s degree in this area (Psychoneuroimmunology and AIDS Progression) I have also studied the immune system at Project Inform in California, which at that time had the greatest amount of information on AIDS in the world. I then investigated the research available regarding nutrition and HIV/AIDS.

My conclusion, based upon literally thousands of scientific research studies, and personal experiences, are: Firstly it is a myth that HIV is 100% fatal – there are people who have lived healthily for many years, and continue to do so. This is scientific fact. Secondly, there are methods available to the average person to deal effectively with HIV/AIDS. This is not ‘positive thinking’ – it is realistic hope, based upon solid scientific research.

Very little of what you will read in this book is new: The research has existed for many years – thousands of studies, in fact. All that I have done is present it in a manner, which is (hopefully) easy to understand and apply. It is not intended for academics or scientists – it is intended for the average person.

Will this information be accessible to everyone? Probably not – there are people who cannot read and write, and I hope that those who can read will transfer the knowledge to these people. Nor can everyone afford vitamins. However, the majority of the methods require little, if any, money.

My hope is that, once enough people have access to this knowledge, our entire perception of AIDS will shift away from fear and stigma, towards creating a worthwhile future, and compassion for each other. Loneliness is worse than AIDS.

Finally, it is important to note that the methods described are not intended as a replacement for medical treatment or drugs. They can be used together, as the methods described are largely aimed at strengthening the body’s immune system.

Neil M. Orr
(MA Research Psychology, UCT)
Foreword by Dr Ashraf Grimwood

Harmony and balance are often what one grapples with when faced with the calamitous diagnosis of HIV. Too often denial is the easiest state to be in, comfortable and reassuring, yet all consuming and ultimately destructive to oneself and to others.

What Positive Health successfully achieves is to provide a self-help guide toward hope and harmony. For this to occur, there is the need to realize that the body, mind and soul together make up the ‘holistic’ self and that working on all these areas leads to a healthy state. Positive Health has borrowed extensively from the ancient art of healing called Ayurveda (the ‘art of life”), and has shown that even today with modern epidemic we can rely on old and often forgotten wisdom to meet the challenges of our times. This science has given us many cost-effective and cheap interventions (recipes), and it is reassuring to see them being resurrected in a way that is easily understood and easily applicable to the conditions we experience in Southern Africa.

HIV and AIDS have been given such a negative and fearful face, that being invisible is the best way to cope with this infection. When hope and desire are taken away, the life force dissipates opening the self to disease and death. To give back hope and desire is the greatest of gifts, and this is what Positive Health does in the simplest of ways. Taking control of the self, relying on the self and being able to survive, dreams and flourish are the mission of the text.

To address the impact of this epidemic we need a revolution, but for any revolution to succeed, we need to start with ourselves. We all have a personal journey to undertake. Only once we are clear in ourselves about who we are, can we move ahead and unite to fight this pandemic.

Positive Health successfully facilitates our own personal revolution, so we can help ourselves to help others.

Dr Ashraf Grimwood
Message from Peter Doyle

Living positively with HIV

Stress, malnutrition, poverty and loneliness are some of the factors that significantly hasten the progression to AIDS of many people infected with HIV. Healthy living has become the key to the longevity of so many pressurised by the demands of the modern world, and equally challenged by their HIV status.

In Africa, AIDS drug therapies are currently unaffordable for most, and will remain so for some time in the future. It is in this context that, when pronounced HIV-positive, many people feel completely hopeless as they believe that there are a few options open to them. They feel as though their death certificate has been signed and that all they have left to do is wait to die. Their feelings of despair are multiplied by the stigma, ignorance and often violence, which continue to underpin the epidemic. Reports have shown how people living with HIV and AIDS (PWAs) have had to face being cast out of their families and communities. They have been assaulted both physically and emotionally, when they have opted to disclose their status.

There seems to be little understanding that whilst we should continue to do whatever we can to prevent new HIV infections, there are ways for PWAs to live healthy and productive lives, even in the absence of drug therapies. Being infected with HIV is not a death sentence.

Metropolitan is proud to be associated with the Positive Health initiative. This book takes a fresh, new look at healthy living for people who are infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. Written by Neil Orr (a psychologist), in association with David Patient (someone who has lived a healthy life with HIV for 18 years), this book is not just about what to eat, or how to exercise to keep your immune system strong. Positive Health looks at your life completely holistically. Ever thought about the life-giving properties of enough sleep... and what about the value of meditation and prayer?

Neil and David have spent many hours putting together this invaluable source of information, advice and guidance. Positive Health is written in the simplest language, with easy to follow instructions. The book offers all sorts of useful information, from easy ways of getting your daily dose of selenium and zinc without breaking the bank, to spending a few minutes a day getting your mind and spirit in tune.

I have read this book, and these pages have changed my ideas about healthy living and how this relates to HIV infection. I urge you to do the
same. Whether you are a PWA, a caregiver to PWAs, or a person affected by HIV/AIDS, read **Positive Health**. Its contents will change, for the better, the perception you have of your body, and your view of the world around you, and the thoughts you have about your life. I also urge you to pass it on to your friends and family.

**Peter Doyle**  
CEO: Metropolitan Group
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Introduction

This booklet is written for two groups of people:

- Those people who are HIV-positive
- Those people who care for people who are HIV-positive

The focus of this book is staying healthy.

This means physical, mental and spiritual health. We do not focus upon curing illness, as this is a complicated area, and is best dealt with by a doctor or a traditional healer. Instead, we present methods for presenting illness.

We do discuss some simple home remedies for treating common non-life threatening physical ailments that occur in HIV infection. These are not intended to replace medical or traditional healer treatments.

You CAN have a long life

You may believe that if you have HIV you will definitely someday die of AIDS. This is not necessarily true. Although many people do indeed die from AIDS, there are also those HIV-positive people who do not get ill and die from AIDS.

Presently about five people out of a hundred HIV-positive people do not get ill from AIDS, even 15 to 20 years after infection. These people are called long-term survivors.

There are even some long-term survivors who were very ill from AIDS, and who have regained their health, and have stayed healthy since. How did they do it? This book is based upon all the knowledge and studies that we have done about these long-term survivors. We hope to tell you as much as we can about how they did it, so that you too can be a long-term survivor. If you take care of yourself, you may be one of those who stay healthy for many years.
Where do you start?

It will take a while to change the behaviours and attitudes that you need to change in order to improve your health. Do not worry if you cannot do it fast enough. There is much to learn, and much to do.

We have divided this book into four main sections:

- Introduction
- A Healthy Body – diet, exercise and some home remedies.
- A Healthy mind – how to deal with stress and emotions effectively.
- A Healthy Soul – healing your spirit.

You will find that most of the information and methods we discuss will cost you very little.

It may, however, require of you to find out where to obtain certain things, such as specific food or plants that are useful in preventing and treating certain illnesses.
**Why live – Why be healthy?**

For someone who is excited about life, and who has many things that she or he wants to achieve in life, it is strange to consider that someone else may not want to look after his or her health. And yet, for many people, the truth is that there is not always a very strong reason to make the effort to look after her or his body and health.

**How do you know if you have a strong reason to live?**

One way is to be honest with yourself: When you read about all the things that you could do to be healthy, do you think that it sounds like a lot of struggle, or do you get excited that you can stay healthy and alive and a lot longer than you thought you could?

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**You need a reason to live.**

Health is a means to an end, not the end itself.

We have seen people die, even though they knew everything there is to know about staying healthy with HIV. We have also seen people who know very little about what to do, living well even though it was a struggle.

Health is not about knowing all the facts – it is about wanting to be alive, and therefore using knowledge to achieve that.

There are three ways to deal with this question:

1. I can’t think of a reason to live, so I won’t bother trying to stay healthy.
2. I can’t think of a reason right now, but I am sure there must be one. So, I will do my best to stay healthy until I find a reason.
3. I have a reason to live ... I just want to know how to do it.
Which way are you going to choose to follow?

Let us look at three ways:

1. **I have no reason to live, and so I will not bother to be healthy.**

   A person who has never seen the ocean, or experienced the joy of swimming in the waves, cannot be convinced to save money for a holiday at the sea. I want you to consider the possibility that it is indeed possible to be happy. Just because your life has been painful or boring, does not mean that it will always be that way. If your life has been painful or empty, then what good reason do you have to keep it the same? Why not try something different – what do you have to lose? If you have tried something that did not work, why not try something different, such as having some fun?

2. **I’m not sure what my reason to live is, but there must be one, so I will try to stay healthy.**

   Indeed, the fact that you are alive shows that you have a reason to continue. It is possible that you can experience joy, fun, and laughter; love by living longer, and by being healthy. Being afraid to die is not a reason to live, as the motivation of fear is to avoid pain. The motivation to live needs to be based upon a desire to experience more learning, more love, more pleasure, more joy. What is it that you would like to accomplish and experience? What have you loved about life so far? How can you get more of it? No one said that it would be easy... however; there are certain things that make the effort worthwhile. What are those things, for you?

3. **I have a reason to live. Tell me how to do it.**

   Ok. Read on...

   **If your reason to stay healthy is so that you can experience more of the joys of life, you will find ways to have more joy and life. If you believe that health is a method to avoid pain, then you will not have more life, only more pain, even if you live longer.**
True stories of long-term survival

EDNA

We met Edna at an AIDS conference several years ago, in Cape Town. She is from Kenya, and at the time we met her she was 32 years old. She had been infected for about ten years, and she was healthy and fit. In fact, she almost shone with health and happiness. Today – five years later – she is still healthy, and has been HIV infected for 15 years.

When Edna was diagnosed as being HIV-positive she was shocked because she had been faithful to her husband for many years, and the diagnosis meant that he’d had sex with other women while he was married to her. Furthermore, when she told her husband about the HIV test, he told her to leave, and he kept their two children. Her family also rejected her, as they did not know that you cannot get HIV just from being near someone.

Having no home, no family and no job, she left the village where she lived and moved to the city of Nairobi in order to get a job so that she could feed herself. This was not easy, and many nights she slept outside on the pavement. One day she was desperate, and she went to the local church to seek help. At first the people there did not want her to stay. However, a kind man gave her food, and helped her get a job at a fish factory nearby.

Edna is a religious woman. She often prayed to GOD, asking why he was punishing her in this way, and she was angry at God for doing this. One night, as she was praying, a voice said to her that God loved her. She was most surprised, as she thought that God was punishing her! Over the next few months she began to think about why this was happening to her. Was it punishment by God, or was it some kind of test? Eventually she came to the conclusion that God does not hurt his children, and that it was people who were causing the pain.

When she read the bible, it said that God loved all his creatures. This was another surprise to her, as this meant that God loved HIV as well! How is this possible? She did not understand, but accepted that this might be true. So she pretended to have a discussion with the virus in her body, and came to an agreement that she would not kill it if it did not try to kill her.

Edna says that this was an important event for her, as she no longer felt as if there was an enemy in her body, and perhaps she could learn something from it.

Over the next few years she realized that here were many people with HIV and AIDS who were being rejected by their families and communities. So she began to speak to people about her experiences, and offered to help where she could.
At the time when we spoke to her, her husband and one of her children had already died from AIDS, and she had reconciled with her family.

We asked Edna about exercise and diet. She says that she is always busy (except for Sundays), and she tries to eat as much fruit and vegetables as possible. She does not smoke or drink alcohol.

We also asked her how she deals with the rejection of other people when they find out that she is HIV-positive. She says that it was her faith in God that has helped her, because she knows that she is never alone and is always loved.

She laughs when she says that she does not care what people think of her anymore – she knows that she is following the path that God intends for her. She says that she has also faced all the things she feared most – being rejected, losing her family and children, illness and death, and she has little to fear anymore.

She says that she is not concerned for the future, as she knows that her life will end when her task is done, and not before. She is happy, and has even remarried.

Edna did it. So can you!
True stories of long-term survival

DAVID

David has been HIV positive for almost 20 years, and is one of the longest-surviving (and healthy) people with HIV in the world today. He was born in Zambia in 1961.

He got infected with HIV in about 1981, and in 1983 he became ill. His doctor told him that he had six months to live, and that he should not come back to the doctor’s office, as the other patients would object. Blood samples from this time were later tested and shown to be HIV-positive.

When he became ill in 1983 he had already developed symptoms of what is today called AIDS. He had lost over one-third of his body weight, had severe lung infections, and his immune system was almost completely destroyed. He says that the first thing he thought of after being told that he was going to die was that he might as well have some fun before he died! He also did a rather strange thing: he bought his coffin planned his own funeral, and then he bought a house!

Over the next year or so, many of his friends died of AIDS. He was depressed, so he climbed to the top of a mountain in Las Vegas, and he decided to have a talk with the virus in his body. He said to the virus that he accepted the fact that the virus could kill him. However, he also told the virus that he could kill it by killing himself. So he negotiated a deal with the virus: "If you do not kill me, I will not kill you."

Over the next few years his health improved. He has been tested over 35 times at various medical institutes, and each test shows that he is HIV-positive, but that his body has become gradually stronger over time. This, as you can imagine, was the cause for a great deal of interest from medical researchers. After about four to five years his body (immune system) returned to normal states of health, and has remained that way ever since. In many ways, he is considered to be a medical mystery.

David says that, although he is not religious in any way, he has strong spiritual beliefs, and he says he talks to God almost every day. He does not like to discuss this aspect of his life, as he says it is private.

He also says that the most important thing he ever did was to change his attitudes about himself and other people. He says that his problems at school caused him to need other people’s approval. Apparently, this has changed his life. It meant that he began to tell people what he felt and thought, even when the other person did not like it. He
says that he has to be honest, as telling lies to protect other people’s feelings is not good for him or for them.

He does not do any form of exercise, but people who know him will tell you that he is almost constantly busy doing things, never sitting still! He also says that he does not follow any specific diet, but that he makes sure that he eats well.

David also says that it was important for him to deal with his fears of death and dying, and that he is grateful that he did this early in his infection.

One of the events that changed his views on his HIV infection was when a friend of his was lying in bed, dying. David was standing around, feeling depressed, thinking about how unfair life was. His friend got angry, and told him to stop being so ungrateful because at least he could go outside, walk around, smell the air, and have fun. David says from that moment onwards he has tried not to take life for granted, and he now makes a point of watching the sun rise and set, and taking some time to appreciate nature, music, and all the good things in life. When he wakes up in the morning he thanks God for breathing, and another day to do more things.

David did it. So can YOU!
**True stories of long-term survival**

**How they did it**

Edna and David represent what other HIV-infected people do to stay healthy and happy: They...

- Accept that the virus is in their bodies.
- Eat properly and regularly.
- Lead active lives. Do not give up. Take time to relax.
- Grow stronger as a result of rejection, death, and upsetting events.
- Have strong spiritual beliefs and values.
- Talk to the HIV in their body and form an agreement with it.
- Strive to make the world a better place to live in, for themselves and for other people.
- Are honest about thoughts and feelings – they express their feelings.
- Do not believe that God is punishing them.
- Believe that HIV and AIDS is simply a challenge to be faced and dealt with as best as they can.
- Focus their attention on the future, and not the past.
- Make an effort to educate themselves about what HIV and AIDS are.

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**They did not do one thing that changed their lives.**
**They did many different things.**
**It did not happen overnight.**
**It took time to change certain parts of their lives.**
What is HIV?

HIV is an abbreviation for Human Immune Virus.

A virus is a kind of germ. It is extremely small and cannot be seen with your eye – you could fit thousands of HIV on the head of a pin.

How does your body fight HIV?

Your body is made up of small living building blocks, called CELLS. HIV mainly attacks one kind of cell, called the HELPER T-CELL (also called the CD4 cell).

There are number of cells which fight HIV. The main one is called the FIGHTER T-CELL (also called the CD8 Fighter cell).

What is AIDS?

AIDS is an abbreviation for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Acquired: Obtained from some outside source.
Immune: Your body’s ability to fight illness.
Deficiency: Not enough ability to fight illness.
Syndrome: Not just one kind of illness – can be one of several illnesses.

HIV is not AIDS. HIV causes weakness of the body. AIDS is any illness that arises out of the weakness. Any illness – including Tuberculosis, cancer, pneumonia, and great weight loss due to constantly upset stomach – that enters when your body is very weak due to HIV, is called AIDS.

Is there a cure?

At present, there is no medical cure for AIDS, and no guaranteed way to remove HIV from your body.

Two reasons why there is no cure yet:

- HIV hides away in parts of your body where very few medicines can find it.
- HIV changes all the time. A medicine that can kill it today may not work in six month’s time.
There are two types of treatment for AIDS:

- **Medical**
  
  **AZT Medicine**: Helps your body for a while. Then it can become poisonous to your body. All Anti-Retrovirals can be toxic (poisonous).

  **Combination Therapy Medicine**: Expensive. Not a cure but helps many people live longer. It can also become poisonous to your body.

  **Prophylaxis Medicine**: Various medicines, which are aimed at preventing many of the common AIDS infections. Very useful, but expensive because they need to be taken for a long time.

- **Non-Medical Methods**
  
  Herbal (plants), diet, attitudes (mind), prayer.

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**What is not safe?**

You can infect someone else by...

- Having sex without a condom. You can get diseases from the other person, and possibly get re-infected with the virus.
- Sharing an injection needle with someone else.
- Bleeding directly into the open wound of someone else.
- When an HIV-positive woman has a baby.
- Breast-feeding
- Sharing your toothbrush with anyone else.
- Using the same shaving blade as someone else.
- If you participate in a traditional ceremony where you are cut with a blade, ensure that the same blade is not used on someone else.

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**What is safe?**

You cannot infect someone by...

- Sharing food, pots, knives and forks.
- Sleeping in the same bed.
- Using the same toilet or chair.
- Touching or hugging and kissing
- Mosquito Bites: It is not possible for someone else to get infected with HIV if the same mosquito that has drunk your blood bites them.
- There is not enough HIV in vomit, faeces, tears and urine (pee) to infect anyone else.

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**Wounds and cuts**

Clean the wound with clean water and antiseptic. Cover the wound with a bandage or plaster. You cannot infect someone else if you do this.
Part 1:

*Healthy Body*

**(Diet, exercise and some home remedies)**

How to help your body to stay healthy.

Easy ways to give your body more strength.

**Stay Warm**

*Your body fights germs (including HIV) better when it is warm.*

One of the easiest - and best – methods of staying healthy with HIV (or any other infection) is to ensure that your body does not get cold.

Normal body temperature for adults is 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit). If your normal body temperature were just one degree warmer than normal, it would fight HIV much better. This is because heat weakens the virus, and at the same time, heat increases your body’s ability to fight infections.

**Certain things reduce your body temperature:**

- Being tired.
- Staying outside in the cold.
- Not enough exercise.
- A naturally slow metabolism.
- Not enough calcium in your food.
- Not enough starch (energy food) in your diet.

Your ‘metabolism’ is basically the speed at which your body works. A slow metabolism would mean that your heartbeats slower, your temperature is lower, and you would move slower as well. Some people naturally have a slower metabolism than others.

Please note that we are not talking about experiencing coolness for short periods of time, such as if you swim in a pool to cool down on a hot day. Rather we are talking about your general (normal) body temperature, on a day-to-day basis.

If you sit still and do little all day, your body temperature is lower, as your body is not working as much. Similarly, if you are tired, your body temperature drops because your body does not have enough energy to stay warm.
**Fever and night sweats**

Your body will automatically increase its temperature in order to fight an infection. This is normal and natural. It is also good. It is more alarming when you feel cold all the time. If you get very hot and sweat at night, this is not bad – it shows that your body is fighting an infection in the best way it knows how. Help it to do this by ensuring that you drink lots of water to replace the sweat, and also eat well to give your body the energy to fight the infection.

Do not be afraid of fevers or of running a temperature. Fevers are good – the heat destroys the germs. However, you need to be careful that the fever does not become too high, as this can cause damage as well. If you have a very high fever, try to bring your temperature down with tepid (lukewarm) water in a bath. See a doctor if this persists.

**Cayenne pepper and metabolism**

Some people just have a lower temperature and metabolism than others. To raise your temperature and metabolism, mix a quarter teaspoon of Cayenne Pepper (purchased in orange-red powder form in the spice section of most supermarkets) into a glass of milk or water, stir, and drink. Do this three times a day. If you have stomach problems, consult your doctor first.

**Rest properly**

If you work hard, you need to rest and sleep properly. Stress through working hard is not caused by the hard work, but by the absence of proper rest. Do not work when you are tired – get some sleep when you are tired. When you have a holiday, spend time resting and relaxing, instead of working all the time.

**Exercise and physical activity**

Physical movement keeps your body’s temperature higher, and also helps your body to fight infections by keeping your lymph glands working properly. Your body stores its fighter cells in areas called lymph glands. Lymph glands depend on muscle movement to work.
What kind of exercise is good?

- Walking or jogging for twenty minutes a day.
- Stretching exercises.

Only professional athletes should attempt very strenuous exercise. For any one else, such exercise is not good. If you want to be fit – which is good – do it gradually. If you are ill then ask someone to slowly and gently bend your arms and legs to get the lymph glands working. This will help to fight infections.

Calcium and magnesium

Your body needs calcium to maintain a good temperature. This can be obtained from certain foods, especially root vegetables (e.g. potatoes, ndumbi, sweet potatoes), seeds and nuts.

Calcium is only absorbed and used by the body when it is taken with food that contains magnesium. Although dairy products – such as milk – contain a lot of calcium, they are not a good source of calcium, because it does not have much magnesium. Dark green vegetables have lots of magnesium. Always combine calcium and magnesium-rich foods for the best effects. If you take vitamin-mineral supplements, an adult needs about 500mg calcium and 300mg magnesium (together) every day.

Energy food: starches

Starches are foods that provide energy for your body to work. If you only ate meat or other proteins, you would get ill, and you would not have any energy. Starches are foods such as mielies (e.g. mielie meal porridge), oats wheat e.g. bread, potatoes, ndumbi and sweet potatoes.

Eat your starch in the morning so that it provides you with energy during the day. See pages 32 (Grains and Nuts) and page 33 for quantities.

If you do not eat enough starch, you will crave sweets and sugar, which are not good for HIV infection, as sugar encourages yeast infections.

Wholewheat and brown bread are better for you than white bread.
Protect your stomach

More people die from stomach problems than any other kind of illness.

This includes diarrhoea (running stomach), dysentery (diarrhoea with painful stomach cramps), blood and mucus in stools, painful stomach cramps, and malnutrition (not enough food or not eating the right amount of certain kinds of food).

There are many germs – parasites, worms, bacteria, viruses, protozoa – that live in uncooked food, and in water that is not boiled or treated to kill these germs.

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Protect your stomach and you protect your health!

THERE ARE FOUR THINGS YOU NEED TO DO:

1. **Clean food**: Clean your food, and cook it properly.
2. **Clean Water**: Drink only clean water, and plenty of it.
3. **Clean Stomach**: Clean your stomach one a month.
4. **Eat Well**: Eat fresh food, eat a variety of food, and eat enough.

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1. **Clean food**

   1. **WASH ALL FOOD THOROUGHLY**

   If your water comes from a borehole, well, river or a lake, add one CAP (not cup) of BLEACH to a basin of water. Wash ALL vegetables, eggs and meat thoroughly. The bleach will evaporate, and will not affect the taste of food. Keep cooking and cutting surfaces clean.
2. **COOK MEAT WELL**

Meat often contains worms and other parasites. Cook meat until there is no pink or red inside, especially chicken, bacon, and other meat from pigs. Fish must be either fresh or frozen.

3. **DO NOT OVERCOOK GREEN VEGETABLES**

Potatoes, sweet potatoes, ndumbi and other root vegetables may be boiled or baked. However, green leafy vegetables should not be overcooked or boiled, as they will lose their goodness. Chop such vegetables into small pieces and place them in a colander or grass basket. Place this over a pot of boiling water. Allow the vegetables to steam for about five minutes. They should still be firm when eaten.

4. **AVOID EATING LEFT OVER FOOD**

Food that has been cooked and then left to cool down can gather many germs. Rather cook only as much as you can eat.

2. **Clean water**

**IMPORTANT**

Drink two litres of water everyday to be healthy...

- Water from a Municipality is SAFE to drink.
- Water from boreholes, rivers and lakes Must Be Boiled!

Water from boreholes, rivers and lakes may contain small insects such as water snails, worm eggs and other germs.

A major cause if illness in people with HIV is dirty water. This causes stomach problems such as diarrhoea and dysentery.

**TEA AND COFFEE**

Tea and coffee are fine in moderation. However do not think that you can drink tea and coffee instead of water. You can drink two litres of water AND tea or coffee. Try to cut out sugar in your tea and coffee. If this is not possible then reduce it as far as possible. Both tea and coffee contain tannin, which can be good for you stomach especially if you have an upset stomach. However, try to avoid drinking too much as too much can give you a runny stomach.
**ALCOHOL**

Yes, alcohol can damage your body’s ability to fight HIV. However, small amounts are ok, as long as you do not drink alcohol everyday or in excess.

If you drink spirits (e.g. brandy, whisky, vodka) use sugar free cool drink to mix it with and not ordinary cool drink. The sugar in the cool drink is not good for you. One or two tots of spirits, once or twice a week, should not be harmful unless you are an alcoholic. However, regular drinking of alcohol is harmful to your immune system.

Beer contains lots of sugar and yeast. This is not good for you. Once again one or two beers, once or twice a week is not harmful. More than that can be harmful.

**FRUIT JUICE**

Fruit juice contains many good substances. However, there are some cautions:

a) Always dilute fruit juice in half with water. Pure fruit juice is too strong for your stomach.

b) Drink sugar free (unsweetened) fruit juice only. Sugar is not good for people with HIV.

**3. Clean your stomach**

No matter how much you try to drink clean water and ensure that you eat only clean food, you will most likely be exposed to the eggs of worms and other parasites, even in the cleanest of homes.

There are specific foods that you can eat to keep your stomach clean and free from worms and other parasites, including harmful bacteria.

**PUMPKIN SEEDS**

Do not throw away pumpkin seeds. Eat them! Dry them out in a warm place. This is an old remedy for worms and parasites, and works very well.

A handful of dry pumpkin seeds cleans many worms and parasites out of your stomach. You can eat pumpkin seeds regularly, and we suggest you do so once a week.
CARRROTS (RAW)

You will read later in this book that raw carrots contain high levels of a powerful substance called beta carotene (Vitamin A), which is very important in dealing with HIV.

However, another use for raw carrots is for dealing with worms and other stomach parasites.

Eat at least four medium sized raw carrots once a week for cleaning the stomach. We suggest that you eat raw carrots every day – up to four a day.

GARLIC

Garlic is one of the most remarkable plants in the world. Not only does it reduce high blood pressure, increase low blood pressure and reduce cholesterol, it is also the most powerful plant-based antibiotic known (one – tenth the strength of penicillin). Unlike other antibiotics, garlic does not destroy the good bacteria in your stomach, and is therefore safe to use in large amounts.

Garlic is best chopped into pieces, and eaten raw. Two to three cloves (the smaller pieces of the larger bulb) per day will prevent many infections, not only worms and parasites. For example, garlic juice can treat ear infection, yeast infections and inhaling the fumes of chopped garlic placed in a bowl of hot water (with a towel over your head) helps for chest infections.

Garlic will clean out most – if not all – worms and stomach parasites, if eaten regularly, and in sufficient quantity.

If you object to the smell of garlic, then we suggest that you eat about four cloves of chopped garlic at some point in the week when you will not be in contact with other people. Eat it at night before you go to sleep. You can also drink diluted lemon juice afterwards to remove the smell and taste, or eat an apple or a piece of parsley. Some people slice garlic into small pieces and put it inside a small piece of bread or fruit, and swallow it, to avoid the smell.

No matter what you think or feel about the smell of garlic, regular use of this plant will prevent many illnesses. Cooked garlic is also good, but not as good as raw garlic. You can also buy garlic capsules, which obviously do not produce the smell. However do not waste your money on the garlic capsules that say that they are ‘deodorized’ as this type is not useful.
GROWING YOUR OWN GARLIC

Garlic is very easy to grow, in any soil and climate. It is easiest to buy a head of garlic at a supermarket, and then break it apart into smaller cloves (pieces).

Dig a hole with your finger, and put a teaspoon of ash from an old fire in the hole. Push the garlic clove in the hole (sharp point up, flatter end down). The hole needs to be deep enough so that there is about 2cm soil over the top of the garlic clove.

Water the garlic regularly, but do not let it get too wet. In a few months, the garlic leaves (which look like onions) will start to get brown and die. This is the time to harvest them. You can store garlic for many months.

GROWING YOUR OWN CARROTS

Carrots can be grown at any time of the year, unless you live in an area with snow or heavy frost.

Obtain good seed from a nursery, farm supply, or the gardening section of any supermarket.

Carrots like full sun. Plant the seed about 3mm deep, in good soil with old manure and compost. The seeds will germinate in about one to two weeks if kept warm (about 18 to 21 degrees Celsius). When the seedlings are large enough, plant them out in your garden. Plant them in rows at about 15cm apart. Do not let the plants dry out – water regularly, but not all the time.

About three to four months after you have planted the seed, the carrots will be ready to harvest. To ensure a constant supply of fresh carrots, plant seeds every month.

4. EAT PROPERLY

1. The food requirements for HIV – positive people are different from people without HIV.
This includes daily vitamin and mineral amounts. The reason is that a person with HIV has got a constant infection that the body is dealing with, and it therefore needs more food and vitamins. The RDA (Recommended Daily allowance) printed on the sides of vitamin and mineral packages apply to HIV negative people. Maximum amounts recommended apply to HIV-positive people.
2. **HIV-positive people should do whatever they can to keep their weight up.**
   If this means eating more food, then so be it. If it means eating food that is considered to be fatty, then so be it. Obviously, this does not apply to people with heart problems, or people who are very overweight.

3. **Avoid taking chemical substances that affect your stomach and your ability to absorb food.**
   Some people take antacid tablets for heartburn and acid stomach (indigestion). This can affect your stomach’s ability to absorb good substances from your food. Rather avoid foods that cause heartburn and high stomach acid, and ask your doctor to recommend natural substances that help, instead of tablets. Example: Eat unsweetened natural yoghurt, avoid tea and coffee, and do not take lots of aspirin or other painkillers unless you eat yoghurt to protect your stomach.

4. **Antibiotics can disrupt your stomach’s ability to work properly.**
   Antibiotics kill good and bad bacteria in your stomach. Always take antibiotics with natural unsweetened yoghurt.

The following eating plan will provide you with many of the necessary substances that your body needs to remain healthy and to fight HIV successfully. It is only a guideline.

**THE EATING PLAN IS THE MINIMUM: EAT MORE!**

The eating plan is the **minimum** amount of different kinds of food that an HIV-positive adult needs to eat on a daily basis. If you are ill or you need more energy, you need to increase this minimum amount. You are encouraged to **eat more** than the amounts listed.

**EAT A VARIETY OF FOOD**

You need to vary the types of foods that you eat. There is not one kind of food that will give you all the necessary substances needed to stay healthy – you need to eat various kinds of food.
EAT EACH DAY

*Protein

TWO of any of the following:
- A large piece of meat, chicken or fish (100g) or ....
- Two eggs or ....
- One cup of beans or peas or lentils (plus one tablespoon of uncooked sunflower oil)

*Fruit

THREE whole fruits (or) one-and-a-half cups fruit (can include canned fruit in natural juices-not syrup).

*Vegetables

One-and-a half cups of vegetables (can include one cup of salad)

*Grains and nuts

FIVE of any of the following:
- One slice of bread or
- A small bread roll or Half a bun or
- Half a cup of pasta, rice, sorghum, maize or
- Three quarter cup of cereal (cooked or ready made) or
- One tablespoon of sesame, sunflower or pumpkin seeds (not peanuts)

*Dairy Products

TWO of any of the following:
- One cup of milk or Three quarter cup of yoghurt or
- Big piece of cheese (100g)
EXAMPLE OF A DAILY MENU

Breakfast

Breakfast cereal – one cup Pronutro
One cup Milk (e.g. with cereal)
Two slices toast
One glass of fruit juice (or two fruits)

Lunch

Two boiled eggs
Two (preferably 4 raw carrots)
A small bread roll
One fruit – guava, orange, apple etc

Dinner

A small salad of lettuce, tomato, onion (half cup)
Two portions of vegetables (one cup together)
One baked potato or sweet ndumbi, or half a cup of rice
One cup of cooked beans, with one tablespoon sunflower oil
(Or one piece of meat / chicken / fish)

Note: When eating beans, always add one tablespoon of uncooked sunflower seed oil. If you do this you do not need to eat meat.
GOOD FOOD

Certain types of meat, fruit and vegetables are rich in substances, which help you to fight HIV.

**Protein**

- Liver, especially beef liver
- Beans, peas and lentils are a good substitute for meat, if you include a tablespoon of uncooked sunflower oil poured over your food.

**Vegetables**

- Dark green vegetables (spinach, marog, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, peas, beans) and cauliflower.
- Root vegetables (carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes and ndumbi).
- Orange and yellow vegetables (carrots, pumpkin, squash).

**Fruit**

- Pawpaws, guavas, mangoes, melons, tomatoes, oranges, mulberries and all citrus fruit.
- Fruit juice – look for the kind that has either no sugar added or very little sugar.

**Seeds, nuts and grains**

- Whole-wheat or brown bread is better than white bread.
- Maize, sorghum, oats, barley, rye and other cereals are good.
- Ensure that you eat a tablespoon of nuts especially sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and sesame seeds a day (not peanuts – they can cause shingles).

**Oils**

- The oil from meat and milk products is not good for your heart.
- Sunflower oil (and oils from other seeds) and fish oils (e.g. sardines) are very good. Eat them uncooked if you can.

**Herbs**

- Herbs (plants used in cooking) such as garlic, thyme, parsley, sage, oregano, rosemary and many other non –spicy natural food flavouring are good for you.
FOOD TO AVOID

Sugar

- Sugar encourages the growth of unhealthy fungus (e.g. Candida / Thrush) on your tongue, in the vagina, in your stomach and other areas of your body. (The green mould on old bread or cheese is a type of fungus.)
- More than 20 teaspoons of sugar per day (including sweets and other foods rich in sugar) reduces the number of your body’s fighter cells down by half. This can cause severe health problems such as severe weight loss, diarrhoea, fatigue, and outbreaks of infections. Death can occur if this continues for a period of time.
- As far as possible eliminate sugar – including sweets, chocolates, fizzy cool drinks, cakes and biscuits from your diet. If you are healthy you may eat some sugar (e.g. half a teaspoon of sugar in a cup of tea.) However keep this amount very low. If you are ill, do not eat any sugar at all.

Fried Food

- It is very difficult for your stomach to digest fried food.
- This can lead to stomach upsets and diarrhoea.
- Cooked oils can also be quite bad for your body. Oils from meat and milk products are not good for you. Uncooked plant oils (e.g. sunflower oil) are fine. Butter is better than margarine.

Spicy Food

- Spicy food such as curry, peppers and chillies can irritate your stomach and cause diarrhoea. You can eat such food, but be careful not to eat too much of it.
- Herbs (plants used to flavour food) such as thyme, oregano and parsley usually do not cause stomach problems and may in fact be healthy for you.
WHAT SHOULD I WEIGH?

An adult or woman with HIV shouldn’t weigh less than the following, depending on your height. **Note: These are MINIMUM weights – you should weigh at least a few kilograms more.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Minimum Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feet</td>
<td>Metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'00”</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'02”</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'04”</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'06”</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'08”</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5’10”</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'00”</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'02”</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'04”</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'05”</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'06”</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'08”</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• If you weigh less than the above, see a doctor.
• To gain weight, eat more starches, butter, fatty food, cream – just eat more!

**Eat more!!!**

Unless you are overweight **DO NOT LOSE WEIGHT!**

**Because you are fighting an infection (HIV) your body needs more food.**

**HIV positive people need to eat more than people who do not have HIV.**
HELP! I AM LOSING WEIGHT

You need ‘meat on your bones’ in order to deal with any illness that comes along. If you are underweight, an infection can cause you to weaken very quickly. If you are at a healthy normal weight, you can get thru an illness much better.

Questions to be answered:

• **Have you been on a diet of any kind?** If so, stop (unless medically prescribed).

• **Have you been eating regularly?** If not, begin to do so immediately. Eat at least three times a day, even more. No matter how busy you are, make a point of eating. Otherwise you will not be busy for long!

• **Have you been ill recently?** It is normal to lose weight when you are ill, as long as your appetite is less. Begin to eat as much as you can to regain your weight.

• **Have you been worried or stressed recently?** Stress and worry can cause you to lose your appetite, miss meals and also burn up food too fast. Make a point of relaxing, and get at least six or seven hours sleep every night.

• **How much coffee, tea or alcohol are you drinking?** Too much coffee, tea or alcohol can cause your stomach to work too much. Cut down on the amount of tea, coffee and alcohol.

• **Are you taking painkillers, aspirin, or any other medication for heartburn, indigestion or stomach acid?** These pills can prevent your stomach from working properly, which means that the food you are eating is not being absorbed. See your doctor for alternatives. You need to get your stomach working properly. A tablespoon of cabbage juice is good for acid stomach conditions.

• **Do you have a running stomach?** This indicates that the maybe an infection in your stomach. See a doctor immediately, especially if this has been happening for more than 3 days.

• **Have you been checked by a doctor for stomach parasites?** If not, do so immediately. Most weight loss is due to diarrhoea and dysentery, and this needs to be treated quickly. Also see pages 41 and 61 of the booklet.

See next two pages on how to put on weight.
PUTTING ON WEIGHT

1. Check your metabolism

SLOW METABOLISM: Cold hands and feet, dry hair and skin, feeling tired, low pulse rate, and feeling light-headed (dizzy) when you stand up. This means that your body is not absorbing what you eat, and that you are probably not eating enough. Take a quarter teaspoon of cayenne pepper in a glass of water or milk three times a day to get your body’s metabolism to increase.

FAST METABOLISM: Moist and sweaty skin, high pulse rate, short of breath even when you have not strained yourself. Usually indicates that you have some infection that your body is fighting. See a doctor immediately.

2. Poor Appetite

If you have a poor appetite, then eat smaller amounts, more often. Instead of eating three times a day, eat small meals six times a day. Avoid emotional stress before and during meal times. Do some gentle exercise before meals to stimulate your appetite. Try to keep your favourite foods nearby to encourage yourself to eat.

3. Sore Mouth

If you have a sore mouth you will not want to eat. This is often caused by yeast infections in the mouth, which looks like a creamy substance inside the mouth. There are several methods of treating this. Chew raw garlic every few hours; rinse your mouth with warm salt water or a mixture of baking soda and water; use a toothbrush with soft bristles; don’t use ordinary mouthwashes – they can be too strong; avoid spicy and acidic food. Eat plenty of soft foods, such as soups, custard, soft cooked eggs, jelly and warm (not hot) soft porridge.

4. Diarrhoea (running stomach)

This is usually the cause of weight loss. Regular eating of raw garlic can prevent this. If you have diarrhoea, your top priority is to stop your stomach from cramping. You can buy Imodium or Lomotil from the chemist. This will not cure the diarrhoea, but will at least slow down the diarrhoea. See page 27 the section about cleaning your stomach. See your doctor about your stomach infection. The central core of a pineapple can help to destroy bacteria as well.
Replace fluids and nutrients as follows:

- One cup of water + Two teaspoons of sugar + Quarter teaspoon of salt + The juice of one freshly squeezed orange. Drink this after every time you go to the toilet.

- To replace potassium and sodium lost you can also get a can of cola drink, and stir it until the bubbles are gone. Drink a bottle of this during the day.

- Drink plenty of water (or fruit juice) at least eight glasses during the day. One-third fruit juice + two-thirds water.

REPLACING LOST FLUIDS AND NUTRIENTS

You will notice that we suggest including sugar and sugar-based cool drinks. This can cause yeast infections. Therefore, treat the diarrhoea rapidly – do not wait to see if it goes away. Eat raw garlic when taking sugar, to prevent yeast infections.

WHAT TO EAT TO PUT ON WEIGHT:

Bananas, avocado, nuts (except peanuts), steak, butter, ice cream, cheese, custard, puddings, pasta, porridge, bread, rice, cereals, pancakes, beans, peas, potatoes, ndumbi, sweet potato.

Fish in fish oil.

Protein drinks and milk shakes.

As much garlic as you can handle.

Avoid too much fatty food (e.g. bacon, sausages). Also avoid spicy and fried food.
VITAMIN PILL SUPPLEMENTS

Vitamins and minerals are substances contained in many kinds of food, especially fruit, meat and vegetables. Many of them are essential for your body to fight infections. There is a reason to believe that the lack of certain vitamins can start certain AIDS illnesses.

Even if you follow the Basic Eating Plan, it is unlikely that you would get all the vitamins that you need. This is because the daily requirements of vitamins and minerals for HIV-positive people are higher than for HIV-negative people.

If you take vitamin pills, then the recommended types and daily amounts for an adult HIV-positive person are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXTREMELY IMPORTANT:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELENIUM............</td>
<td>75 to 200 mcg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommended daily dosage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY IMPORTANT:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A RE...</td>
<td>25 000 iu Beta Carotene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or 10 000 iu Vit A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinc........</td>
<td>45 to 75 mg (don’t have more than this)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C....</td>
<td>1500mg to 3000mg (spread over a day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B12...</td>
<td>10 to 20 mcg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANT:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B2..</td>
<td>25 to 50 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B6......</td>
<td>25 to 50 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folic Acid........</td>
<td>1mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron.......</td>
<td>10 to 15 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium....</td>
<td>350-800 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnesium....</td>
<td>200-500 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can buy vitamin and mineral supplement pills at most chemists and supermarkets. Some are cheap, and others a little expensive. A good Multivitamin is recommended.
WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO GET?

Certain vitamins and minerals are more important than others in dealing with HIV. Of these, the most important is SELENIUM.

1. SELENIUM

People who do not have enough selenium in their bodies can develop AIDS illnesses Twenty Times Faster than those who have enough selenium. If there is one supplement you can take let it be selenium.

It is difficult to get selenium from most foods. The cheapest method is to buy selenium pills. For example, a box of 60 pills (200 mcg each) will cost about R40. This will last you about four months if you take half a pill (100 mcg) a day. You can also get 75 mcg selenium from one cup of Pronutro cereal. One cup of shelled sunflower seeds every day will also give you enough selenium. Brazil nuts – one a day – is also sufficient.

Do not take more than 500 mcg a day. Infants need a quarter of the adult dose (25 mcg), and children over six months and less than four years old can have half of the adult dose (50 mcg). Selenium works better with Vitamin E.

2. ZINC AND VITAMIN A

These two substances need to be taken together, as the one needs the other to work properly. They help the part of your body (thymus gland) that produces the cells that control HIV. The best form of Vitamin A is called beta-carotene. This is easily obtained from carrots.

Eat three to four raw carrots a day. Pregnant women should not take Vitamin A pills in the first few months of pregnancy. The safest form of getting Vitamin A is beta-carotene – you can take as much as you like, and pregnant women can also take it with safety.

Zinc is not as easily obtainable in food, so it is best to buy zinc pills. You need about 45 mg a day. These are quite cheap: A box of 100 tablets (each 15 mg) costs about R18. This will be enough for a month. Take three tablets a day.

Infants can take one quarter of the adult dose, and children from six months to four years of age can take half of the adult dose.

3. VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is a substance that is powerful in fighting viruses, including HIV. However, this benefit is only found in high doses – 500 mg to 1000 mg, each dose three times a day, for adults.
Vitamin C is found in many fruits, especially paw paws, guavas, mangos, oranges and tomatoes. However, you would need to eat at least six paw paws a day to get the right amount of vitamin C.

Alternatively, you would need to drink at least three litres of guava juice a day just to get three amounts of about 500 mg vitamin C.

The cheapest form of vitamin C is a substance called ascorbic acid, sold at chemists. It costs about R80 for 200 g, which should last you about two to four months, depending on whether you are taking 500 mg (half a gram) or 1000 mg (one gram), three times a day. Read the dose amounts on the container. Usually only a very small amount of powder is needed.

If you use the ascorbic acid form of vitamin C, we suggest you mix your total daily dose – i.e. a total of about 1500 mg (1.5g) to 3000 mg (3g) – in two litres of water, and drink it slowly throughout the day, instead of all at once. Also, you need to drink it through a straw, as it can otherwise damage your teeth.

Infants under the age of six months can handle half the adult dose (250 mg), and children from six months to four years of age can handle two-thirds of the adult dose (340 mg) a day.

4. **VITAMIN B12**

Vitamin B12 has been shown to slow down the HIV virus from multiplying. You need about 10 to 20 mcg of this vitamin a day. It is best to take it as part of a B-complex supplement, as this will mean you are getting other important vitamin B’s, such as B2, B6 and Folic Acid.

Prices vary: One type contains 10 mcg per pill at 43c per capsule (75 pills box = R35), and another type contains 25 mcg (higher and recommended daily dose), at about 47c per tablet (60 pills per box = R26). Therefore, daily cost varies from 43c to 47c.

Vitamin B12 can also be obtained in sardines, oysters, tuna, meat, eggs and dairy products. **HIV-infected infants** below the age of six months need about one quarter of the adult dose (3 to 5 mcg) a day, and HIV-positive children over the age of six months and less than the age of four years need about half of the adult dose (5 to 10 mcg) a day.

**VITAMIN COSTS PER MONTH**

When you buy vitamin pills for the first time, it will probably cost a little more than normal, because some boxes of pills will last for more than a month.

Most supermarkets sell vitamin pills. However, you will probably only get ascorbic acid from a chemist. Selenium is not frequently sold in smaller
chemists, and rarely in supermarkets. It is worth ordering selenium from your chemist.

The prices stated below are averages. We looked for the cheapest products with the necessary amounts of vitamins and minerals. Please look at the box and read the contents before buying what you need. We have based the prices on the minimum daily needs for HIV-positive adults.

The table shows what you need to buy.

You need to buy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Daily Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selenium</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pills</td>
<td>R0.33 per day for 100 mcg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronutro</td>
<td>R1.00 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(75 mcg per 50g / 1 cup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carrots</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 medium sized</td>
<td>R0.40 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Contains beta carotene (18 mg) equivalent to 10 000 iu Vitamin A</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zinc</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pills</td>
<td>R0.53 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3 x 15 mg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B12</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-complex pills</td>
<td>R0.43 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(with 10 mcg B12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vitamin C</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask your chemist</td>
<td>R1.20 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ascorbic acid)</td>
<td>(3 x 1000 mg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>R 2.89 per day (R86.70 per month)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the prices quoted were obtained from a large supermarket and chemist in a medium sized city at the end of 1999. Prices may vary in different parts of the country.
Infants and vitamins

- Infants (babies younger than six months) need about one-quarter of adult levels of vitamins and minerals.
- The exceptions are CALCIUM (half of adult levels; this mineral is found in potatoes, ndumbi, sweet potato and other root vegetables) and IRON (only a little less than an adult’s needs; this mineral is found in beef liver, vegetables with dark green leaves and chicken livers).

Children and vitamins

- Generally speaking, children under the age of four years need about half the adult dosage of daily vitamins and minerals. The exception is CALCIUM (for growing muscles and bones), which such young children need almost as much as adults. This is found in potatoes, ndumbi, sweet potatoes and other root vegetables.
- Children more than four years need almost as much vitamins and minerals as adults.

Pregnant Women

An HIV positive woman who is pregnant must eat well.

- To lower the chances of infecting her baby with HIV, she should eat enough food containing vitamin A.

She needs to take vitamin A in the form of beta-carotene, which can be obtained from eating FOUR RAW CARROTS every day. Other foods that contain vitamin A are:

Sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peas, beans, spinach, cabbage, pumpkin and beef.

- A pregnant woman also needs more IRON than other people. This can be obtained from vegetables with dark green leaves (marog, spinach, broccoli, cabbage, peas, beans) and liver preferably beef liver.

Sexually active men

- The semen (sexual fluid) of a man contains high levels of the important substance of ZINC.
- A man who has frequent sex should eat PUMPKIN SEEDS (a tablespoon), or take a 15 mg zinc pill after each time he has sex to replace the substance back into his body.
**Pregnancy and birth**

If you are pregnant it is important that you get checked at a clinic or hospital for syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, hepatitis B and herpes. These can damage the baby during pregnancy and during birth.

If you feel tired and have no appetite, get checked at a clinic, as this can be due to too little iron in your blood (anaemia) or HIV. If it is anaemia, take iron pills or eat more liver, raisins, peas and beans, egg yolk and fish. If you get headaches, nausea and constipation, you may be taking too much iron. Eat three to four raw carrots everyday to keep your vitamin A levels up. This can help reduce the chances of infecting the baby during birth. Eat well, and look after yourself.

All babies born by normal means to HIV-positive mothers are born HIV-positive. **However, babies who are born HIV-positive do not always stay HIV-positive.** Up to about 15 to 18 months of age, about three out of four babies then change to HIV negative. Therefore, the chance of giving birth to a baby who remains HIV-positive is about one in four (between 25 and 30 percent). A pregnant mother who is weak and ill has a higher chance of giving birth to a baby who remains HIV-positive after 15 to 18 months. Therefore, she should take care to stay healthy and eat well during pregnancy.

Certain medicines (such as AZT) reduce the chance of the baby staying HIV-positive. AZT can be taken by the mother during the last few weeks or months of pregnancy. Eating carrots (see 'Pregnancy' above) during pregnancy can reduce the chances of the baby remaining HIV-positive. Studies indicate that carrots (Vitamin A/beta – carotene) are highly effective in lowering the risk of mother-to-child infection.

**Breast-feeding**

There is a small risk of re-infecting a baby by breast-feeding. However, a baby will be weaker without mother’s milk, and this can make it more likely for the baby to remain HIV-positive. Therefore, breastfeeding is recommended, especially continuous breast-feeding for mothers who cannot afford milk formula. This means that you breast-feed without using other food sources for the baby, until it is old enough to eat solids. The other choice is to use only baby formula, and not breast feed at all. It appears that the greatest risk of infection due to breast-feeding occurs when breast-feeding and other methods of feeding are combined.
**HIV-Positive Children**

The illnesses that HIV-positive babies and children get are the same as those that HIV-positive adults get. For reasons, which are not clear, there are two different things that can happen to a HIV-positive from a HIV-positive mother:

1) About one out of three babies develop serious illnesses within the first year.
2) About two-thirds of babies tend to stay well beyond their first year, and if they get ill, their illnesses are not as bad as babies from group 1.

All HIV-positive babies should be checked by a doctor at least every three months.

**Vaccinations**

All children (and adults) who are healthy and HIV-positive need to be vaccinated against certain common illnesses, such as measles, mumps and rubella. Children and adults who are not well should not be automatically vaccinated, as they may be too weak to deal with it. Ask a doctor whether you are healthy enough to be vaccinated.

Children should be vaccinated against chicken pox as well.

Check at the clinic that a HIV-positive chill is still immune to measles once a year, as sometimes it does not work well the first time.

**Caution:** Certain kinds of vaccine (e.g. polio) are done with live germs (OPV). This should be avoided, as your (or a child’s) body may not be strong enough to deal with it. Ask the doctor to give you a ‘killed-virus’ polio (IPV) vaccine. Even if someone else in your household is being vaccinated, they should also be vaccinated, they should also be vaccinated with ‘killed-virus’ (IPV) polio vaccine. Otherwise, they may infect HIV-positive adults and children with the poliovirus.

Whenever considering vaccinations ask your doctor what kind of vaccine it is and whether it is wise at that point in time.
**IMMUNE - BOOSTING HERBS**

Some herbs are good to use, some are not safe to use, and others can cause more harm than good.

**African Potato (Hypoxis)**

**Inkomfe (Zulu)**

Traditionally prepared by slicing the bulb, drying it in the shade (not in the sun, and not boiled), and then pounding it into a powder form. Half a teaspoon of the powder is taken in half a cup of boiled water. This is repeated three times a day. The benefits commence in two weeks.

If you experience diarrhoea (running stomach) or headaches, then you have used the wrong kind of plant. Hypoxis looks like an over-grown onion that is almost rotting. It is black in colour, and is covered with fibres (hairs). This plant has become scarce, and even endangered in some areas. There are white and yellow- flowered types.

The raw product also contains small amounts of poisonous chemicals (alkaloids). Therefore, do not use the raw powdered substance for more than three months at a time, followed by six weeks absence.

The manufactured products (Moducare or Immunoboost) have had these poisonous chemicals removed, and are safe to use. They cost about R70 to R100 for a month’s supply. Obtained from chemists and most health food shops.

The active immune boosting ingredients are chemicals called Sterols and Sterolins. These chemicals act to strengthen the part of the immune system that fights viruses (TH1 System), including HIV. Scientifically proven to help people with HIV.

To grow Hypoxis, it is useful to know that the seed will only germinate when exposed to the smoke from grass fire.

**Echinacea (Cone Flower)**

Often sold as an ‘immune booster’. It unfortunately boosts the wrong part of the immune system (TH2 System), which weakens the part of the immune system which fights HIV (TH1 System). Use of this herb for more than two weeks can actually promote development of AIDS. Use only for bacterial infections. Do not use for more than two weeks at a time.
**Sour Fig**

Ikhambilibabulawo (Zulu) – Suurvy (Afrikaans)

Indigenous succulent. Traditional treatment for Vaginal Thrush: Chop leaves finely, to fill half a cup. Fill other half of cup with vinegar. Let it stand for a few hours. Strain out chopped leaves, leaving the liquid in the cup. Fill the cup with warm water, and wash the inside of the vagina with the liquid. Repeat every eight hours.

**Lemon Juice**

Use pure lemon juice only – not lemonade or sweetened lemon drinks. Pure lemon juice can be bought in grocery stores for about R6 (for 250ml). Two tablespoons of pure lemon juice is equivalent to one whole lemon.

**GENERAL ANTI-HIV EFFECTS:** Although lemons taste sour (acid) they sweeten the blood (make it more alkaline), more than most other foods. This helps to fight viruses, including HIV, as viruses do not like sweet blood (alkaline). It is suggested that you drink the juice of one lemon (in water) every day.

**LEMON AND OLIVE OIL DRINK:** Reportedly increases appetite, energy levels, reduces swollen lymph glands, normalises body temperature and improves the immune system. Add two tablespoons of pure lemon juice to one tablespoon of cold pressed extra virgin olive oil. Add one-quarter teaspoon of cayenne pepper. Add half a cup of water or fruit juice. Mix well together. Drink this immediately. Do this once a day.

**HERPES BLISTERS (COLD SORES & SHINGLES):** Put a few drops of pure lemon juice directly on the affected area. Repeat several times a day until the sores are gone. NEVER touch your eyes if you have touched the sores - wash your hands immediately afterwards.

**Bulbinella / Bulbine**

*Ihucu* (Zulu)

Low-growing indigenous succulent (*Bulbinella frutescence*). Yellow or orange flowers. Very easy to grow from cuttings. Excellent for healing Herpes blisters (Cold sores or shingles). Squeeze the juice from a leaf and gently place over the blisters. It dries the blisters out and helps heal the infection. Never touch your eyes if you have touched the sores – wash your hands immediately afterwards.
PHYSICAL HEALTH: A SUMMARY

Do the following to stay healthy and prevent illness:

- Have a reason to stay healthy (p1 – 5)
- Stay warm (p18 – 22)
  - Fever/Night sweats – cayenne pepper – rest
  - Exercise – calcium/magnesium – energy food
- Protect your stomach (p23 – 42)
  1. Clean food
  2. Clean water: tea/coffee/alcohol – fruit juice
  3. Clean your stomach: pumpkin seeds – carrots – garlic
  4. Eat properly: eat more – eat a variety
     - Keep your weight up – avoid sugar, fried and spicy food
     - How to put on weight
- Vitamin and mineral supplements (p43 – 51)
  - Infants – children – pregnancy – sexually active men
- Pregnancy and birth and children (p52 – 54)
- Vaccinations (p54 – 55)
- Immune-boosting herbs (p56 – 58)
PHYSICAL HEALTH
IMPORTANT TIPS:

Eat garlic regularly
Garlic is a powerful plant, which can kill many infections in your stomach and elsewhere. Many illnesses begin in the stomach. Eating garlic everyday – can prevent many of these illnesses.

Eat raw carrots and take zinc
Carrots give you vitamin A, which can keep HIV under control. It also cleans out your stomach, preventing stomach illnesses. Zinc helps with this.

Take Selenium everyday
The effects of selenium are extremely powerful in HIV. It is more important than any other mineral or vitamin. Make the effort to find it and take it every day with vitamins E and C.

Cayenne pepper for warmth
If your body is warmer, HIV gets weaker. Take a quarter teaspoon of cayenne pepper every day to keep your body temperature up, unless you have a fever.

Get checked for TB and Syphilis
When you are HIV-positive these illnesses can cause severe health problems. Both of these illnesses are easily treated with medicine, and the treatments are given free in government clinics and hospitals. Get yourself checked for these illnesses, and ensure that you take the prescribed medications if you have these infections, for the period prescribed.

Keep your weight up
Deal with diarrhoea immediately. Do not lose weight. Eat more.
Part 2:

Healthy Mind

(thoughts and emotions)

How your attitude can help you stay healthy.

Your mind affects your health in powerful ways.
**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

There are two powerful ways in which your thoughts and feelings can affect your body:

1. **Your nerves**

When you think or feel something, your brain sends messages to your body through your nerves. A good example is when you think about sex or food: Your body responds AS IF what you are thinking about is real, such as becoming sexually aroused or saliva being released in your mouth.

2. **Hormones**

These are substances released by various parts of your body (glands). For example, when you get a fright your body releases hormones (adrenalin), which causes your body to produce the energy to run away or fight. Stress and worry causes your body to release a hormone called CORTISOL.

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**So What?**

There is no harm in feeling upset or worried for a short period of time, such as for a few days, or even a week or two. When you stop feeling upset your body returns to normal.

However when you worry for a long time – such as worrying about your future and getting ill - this causes your nerves to and hormones to become out of balance.

For example, if you have higher than normal levels of Cortisol for too long, this can cause your body’s ability to fight illnesses (e.g. HIV, cancer, colds and flu) to become weak. **Cortisol also helps HIV to infect your body’s cells.**

The opposite is also true: Feeling confident about the future, and having goals to work towards, causes other hormones (e.g. human growth hormone) to be released which strengthen your body.

**The science, which studies these effects, is called PNI (Psycho – Neuro-Immunology).**
The shock

It is perfectly normal to be shocked when you receive bad news, such as finding out that you have HIV.

It is perfectly normal to feel angry, depressed and that your world has exploded into millions of pieces.

It is normal to feel confused about what this means, and what you can do about it.

It is also normal to try not to think about it, and to think that if you do this, it will somehow go away. This is called denial, and it is your mind’s way of coping with a terrible shock. It is OK to feel this way for a while. However...after a few months this can become harmful, as it prevents you from dealing with the real issues of your health and future.

I am alive: now what?

After you have gone through a period of shock, and probably denial, you will notice that you are still alive...what a surprise!

And here’s another shock: unless you are seriously ill or get knocked over by a taxi or bus, you are going to be alive for quite a few years more!

You now have to make a choice:

1. Do I want to continue pretending that nothing is wrong – knowing inside of me that this is not true – and live in misery?
   Yes, you can do this. Many people do this – it is easy. Miserable, but easy.

2. Do I want to deal with the truth and live a life full of challenge and fulfilment, no matter what happens?
   You can do this as well. Read Edna and David’s stories at the beginning of this book. It is not easy, but it can be done, and it is worthwhile.
HOW LONG WILL I LIVE?

There is no such thing as a fixed time period between infection and AIDS, and then death. It is not even certain that you will get sick with AIDS. This makes HIV infection different from many other illness conditions. All that can be said is that there is an average time period. Some people get sick quickly, some never get sick. There are two main factors which determine the length of time:

- How well you take care of your body (food, exercise, etc.)
- Your attitude

A doctor, nurse or counsellor can only tell you the average amount of years that it takes from an infection until AIDS illnesses, which varies from 9 to 12 years. Some people never get sick with AIDS – ever. You may be one of those, if you take care of yourself.

This does not mean you will fit into that average – you may live longer or shorter, depending upon how you take care of yourself.

However, even if you live longer or shorter than the average, a more important question is:

How well do I want to live?

FUTURE GOALS

You have a future. What are you going to do with it? What are you going to fill it with?

You need pleasure in your life. You need challenge and excitement. These things cause your body to work well. Without these things your body does not work well, and you will get sick at some point.

If you are studying, continue to do so.

If you enjoy your work, then carry on with it.
DO NOT GIVE UP YOUR FUTURE!!!

The truth is that no one knows what the future will bring in terms of treatment and cure. Why give up now?

If you are bored with your job then try to find a more exciting job, or make your job more fulfilling. Perhaps you could learn a new skill which you could find interesting.

Make a list of at least three exciting goals that you want to achieve in the next few years. Start doing them now! What do you have to lose?

HOPE MEANS ACTION

‘Positive’ thinking and ‘Realistic’ thinking

Most people think all you need is a ‘positive attitude’ and all will be well. What do they mean by a ‘positive attitude’? Does it mean that you just pretend everything is fine, even when it is not? No – not at all! When you pretend that everything is fine even when it is not, this is called being dishonest with yourself and other people.

Every long-term survivor will tell you that you have to be REALISTICALLY POSITIVE:
  • If things are not ok, then admit that it is not ok, and do something about it.
  • If you want something to happen, do something about it – do not just dream about it.

TURN YOUR WISHBONE INTO A BACKBONE! TAKE ACTION – DO SOMETHING!

There is no proof that ‘positive thinking’ by itself will improve your health for more that just a little while. If you want to remain healthy for a long time, you need to deal with reality, as it is, decide what you want, and then take action.

People who just dream, and just hope something will happen to make it come true, tend to get sick sooner.

People who dream and then do something to make the dream come true tend to live longer and more happily.

It is no-one else’s job to make you happy. It is YOUR job to make yourself happy.
ACTION FOR A FUTURE

HERE ARE TRUE STORIES OF HOW SOME PEOPLE PUT HOPE INTO REALISTIC ACTION:

MAVIS

When Mavis was diagnosed, she was shocked. The doctor said she would probably live for five to eight years more. A little voice inside of her said, "Wait a minute! Is this a fact? Maybe not…"

The first thing that Mavis did when she got home was to eat an avocado, and she planted the pip into the ground. She said to the avocado pip: "Your name is Hope. I will water you everyday, and one day I will eat from your fruit". With this action, she created hope that she could see everyday.

Mavis is still healthy and well. Just as she took action to create hope, so she has taken action to eat well, learn what she can do to stay healthy, and she says she is happier than she has been for a long time. She continues her studies, as she says she wants to help other people one day with her skills and knowledge.

John

When John was diagnosed he did two things: he went to a funeral parlour and bought a coffin, and paid for his funeral. He said that he had to be realistic that he might die, and he did not want his family to have to deal with these issues. The he went and bought a piece of land and started to build a house, he said that it was possible that he might NOT die, and so he wanted to ensure that he would live in a house that was comfortable.

Both these people were realistically positive. They both realized that it was POSSIBLE (not certain) that they would die. However, they also realized that it was POSSIBLE that they would live, and they acted accordingly.
GOOD AND BAD STRESS

There are two kind of ‘stress’

What is stressful to you will not always be stressful to another person. Only you can say what is stressful for you.

Good Stress

Activity, excitement and challenge, even if it involves hard work. This is called eustress. You can work hard and long hours, and it can be good for your health, IF you enjoy what you are doing, AND you take time to rest and eat properly.

Bad Stress

Boredom, or doing things you do not enjoy or being hurt. This is called distress. You can sit around doing very little, feeling bored or you can do something which does not require much effort, and this can be very bad for your health IF you do not enjoy what you are doing.

Beware of boredom:
It is dangerous for your health!

You need excitement every now and again – some kind of interest and challenge – for your body to work well. This is because your body only releases some good hormones when you are interested and active with exciting things.

As far as possible, do less of the things that you do not enjoy, and more of the things you do enjoy. If your life is boring, make it more interesting – start new projects, learn something new, climb a mountain...anything that will get you excited about being alive. Remember to rest as well.

DEAL WITH FEAR

Fear is a powerful feeling, and it has a strong effect on your body. If fear is not resolved, it can cause great damage to your body’s ability to fight infections. This is because fear causes the release of the hormone cortisol. Releasing fears has a dramatic healing effect on your body. Dealing with fear doesn’t mean that the feared event will not happen. It may still happen. However, because you have a realistic plan of action of how you will deal with it, you will not spend much time worrying about it. This is good for your health. Even if it did happen, you know how you can deal with it. Knowing this will lower the amount of bad stress.

Deal with major long-term fears:
  • Fear of being rejected by people.
• Fear of getting sick and dying.

**How?**

Every fear starts with the words... What if..?
To deal with a fear REALISTICALLY, you have to answer the “What If?” question in the following way:

1. State what the fear is - be specific and honest.
2. Ask yourself: what is the worst thing that can happen?
3. Think: if the worst thing actually happened, how would I deal with it?
   MAKE A PLAN OF ACTION – BE REALISTIC.

It does not help to ‘think positive’ when dealing with fears. The only thing that works to remove the fear is a REALISTIC PLAN OF ACTION that you can use IF it happened. Think about HOW you have managed to get through difficult times in the past. How did you do that?

**GET YOUR FEELINGS OUT**

It has been shown scientifically that when you keep your feelings inside yourself, this causes distress to your body. People who do not express their feelings have a weaker immune system. This is especially true for anger.

**Get it out of your body!**

Does this mean you have to shout and scream at everyone about how you feel? No! Talking to someone else is only one way of getting your feelings outside of your body.

Other methods include:

- Write a letter to the person. Then burn the letter.
- Talk to a picture of the person.
- Scream your anger into a pillow.
- Hit a chair with a rolled newspaper if you are angry.

These methods work IF...

1. You PRETEND that you are talking to that person.
2. You say EXACTLY what you really want to say.
3. You say it OUT LOUD or with ACTION – thinking does not work!
It takes a lot of energy to keep your feelings locked up inside yourself. You cannot waste your energy in that way – you need it to stay healthy. Get your feelings outside of yourself, and you will feel much better.

Say what you really feel to
- the person who infected you.
- The person who rejected you
- The person who hurt you in the past.

**TALK TO THE VIRUS**

Most long-term survivors have at some stage or the other had a conversation with the virus inside their body. There is research to show that this sometimes helps to keep the body healthy. We have no idea why this is so. Perhaps it is because it is stressful to think that there is something inside your body that is dangerous, and which you do not know anything about.

People do this in various ways. Some close their eyes and pretend that they are talking to a person they call Mr Virus. Other people draw a picture of what they think the virus looks like, and then talk to the picture. In all cases, the person allows the virus to talk back. This is done often, over a long period of time. Although this might sound strange it seems to help the body.

We suggest you do the following:

1. Close your eyes and pretend that you can see the virus in front of you. Imagine that it has a face, and it can hear what you have to say. It can also talk back to you. Give it a name.

2. Tell it how you feel about it being in your body. Listen to what it says in reply.

3. Make an agreement with the virus so that you can both respect each other, within certain limits that are acceptable to you.

4. Have this discussion with the virus as often as you feel it is necessary.

**BREATHE!**

There are times when you need to calm yourself down, such as when you are frightened or anxious. The following method works well in these situations. It also helps to relieve headaches:
TO START:

1. Using your right hand, place your thumb lightly on your right nostril.
2. Place the middle and index fingers on the middle of your forehead, slightly above your eyebrows.
3. Place the ring finger lightly on your left nostril.

THEN:

4. Block right nostril with thumb. Breathe in through the left nostril, for five seconds.
5. Block both nostrils (thumb and ring finger), and hold breath for five seconds.
7. Breathe in through right nostril for five seconds. Keep left nostril blocked.
8. Block both nostrils – hold for five seconds.
9. Open left nostril – hold for five seconds.

Repeat steps four to nine until the anxiety gets less.

GET SUPPORT

There are two main kinds of support that you may need from other people in order to deal most effectively with being HIV-infected:

1. Emotional Support

Someone to talk to about how you feel. This can be a friend or family member, or a counsellor. Remember that such a person may not be able to provide solutions to your problems. Such a person needs only to listen to you, and provide emotional comfort.

2. Practical Support

Someone or more than one person who can provide you with the practical information and assistance that you may need from time to time to deal with problems. For example, see a doctor every few months to check your health and to provide you with health advice.

Because of the fears surrounding HIV, most people tend to try to get both types of support from only one or two people, such as their doctor. This is not wise, as a doctor is not necessarily trained to provide emotional support, nor may she or he have the time to do so. If this is the case, ask them to direct you to someone else who can help. You also need to remember that a friend, family member or counsellor may not have the practical information to solve a problem – they may only be able to listen and talk to you.
You need someone to talk to about how you feel. Who can you talk to? Whoever you choose, remember to tell them that you are not asking for them to fix you – only to listen.

If you are too afraid to talk to people you know, then you can phone Life Line – their telephone number will be in the telephone directory. They have trained counsellors and they will not ask for your identity. There may also be other agencies in your area who have trained counsellors – find out if there are any in your area.
Part 3:

Healthy Soul

(love heals)

The greatest power you might have is your ability to choose.

CHOICE

What do you choose to do with your life? Do you feel as if you are a victim? Or do you see yourself as having choices?

Other people may do things to you, but only you can choose how you view and respond to those situations, including being HIV-infected. You have a choice, whether you accept it or not. Even being the victim is a choice, because it is a chosen way of seeing yourself in a situation, and not the situation itself.

Integrity (self-respect) is the ability to think, say, act and feel the same thing.

For example, if you think that you want to be a long-term survivor, then you need to act accordingly, and focus upon feeling alive too.

If you think you are a victim, then act, speak and feel accordingly. Either way, you have a right to choose, and you can change your mind anytime you like. Your integrity (free will) is more important than your body.

Gratitude

The fact that you are reading or hearing this means that you are alive. This is a fact not a belief.

How much time are you spending worrying about the future, and fearing all sorts of things which may or may not happen? While you are doing this, are you aware of the beauty and wonders around you at this moment?

Four years after David was diagnosed with HIV, he was taking care of a friend who was very ill. His friend had lost his sight, was breathing with difficulty, and could not walk anymore. David was sitting around, feeling depressed about the fact that he might also be ill.
His friend called him closer, “Listen you miserable person! Here I am, blind, unable to walk and gasping for breath, while you can go outside, smell the air, walk on the grass, and see the sun rise and set. How dare you be so miserable – I am the one who is dying, not you! You are surrounded by beauty, and you are free to choose what you want to see and do, and yet you sit here feeling unhappy? Get out, you ungrateful piece of rubbish!”

As you can imagine, David was shocked at his friend’s anger towards him. Yet he knew that his friend was right – every second of life is precious and full of possibilities. **It did not matter whether he was ill or healthy. What mattered was that he lived life to the fullest, appreciating every second as it came his way.**

**Take Action!**

**What am I grateful for?**

Make a point of giving thanks for all the small and big things of beauty around you, and that you have the ability (sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing) to appreciate them. Notice that you are alive at this moment.

**LOVE HEALS**

Every religion and spiritual path tells us that love heals. It heals the soul, the mind, and the body. However, where the judgement exists, love cannot enter.

**Do the following exercise every day:**

Close your eyes. Breathe slowly and deeply. Relax and be comfortable. Let all the worries of life move away from you.

1. Imagine in your mind that you can see yourself, as you are now, with all your strengths and weaknesses. Smile and say, “I wish you well”. It is important that you FEEL this to be true. Take as long as you need until you can say this and mean it.

2. Now imagine in your mind that a good friend is standing in front of you, with all his strengths and weaknesses. Smile at him or her and say, “I wish you well”. It is important that you feel this to be true. Take as long as you need until you can say this and mean it.

3. Now imagine that you see someone you know, for whom you have no strong feelings (good or bad) – like the postman or the person who works at the local shop – standing in front of you. Smile at him or her and say, “I wish you well”. It is important that you mean
this and FEEL it to be true. Take as long as you need until you can say this and mean it.

4. Imagine in your mind that a person whom you are having trouble with is standing in front of you. Notice their good points and bad points. Smile at him or her and say, “I wish you well”. It is important that you FEEL this to be true. Take as long as you need to say this and mean it.

5. Imagine that the good feelings inside of you are like a warm sun. Imagine that this warm sun warms your whole body. Then allow the warmth to shine further, through your home, into the town where you live, and even further outwards.

When you are finished, take a deep breath and open your eyes.
**Prayer**

Prayer heals. We do not know how this happens. All that we know is that it does. There are specific things that you should know about prayer:

**Fear and doubt** prevent prayers from being heard. Sometimes our fears and doubts are louder than our prayers. When you pray, simply say what you want to say, and do not worry or think about what you have said or asked for will be heard. Let it go.

**Ask for what you want, and not what you want taken away.** Ask for health, not for illness to be taken away. Ask for the strength to do what you need to do, and not for someone else to do it for you. Prayer is not an excuse for being lazy.

**Be specific.** Say exactly what you want to say – do not use words such as everything or all. Be precise. If you ask for forgiveness, say exactly what it is that you are asking forgiveness for. If you ask for health, then say exactly what you mean by that.

**Think about the consequences.** There is truth in the saying "Be careful for what you ask – you may get it!" What would the consequences be of receiving what you ask for?

**Be willing to receive.** There is no point in asking for something if you believe that you do not deserve it. If you pray for rain, ensure that you have your umbrella nearby!

**Prayer is not just for asking – it is also for saying Thank You.** Again, be specific about what you are grateful for.