



# Updated HIV/AIDS Brochures

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**Workplace basics... HIV & AIDS**

**Millions of South Africans are living with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) – the name of the virus responsible for causing the disease called AIDS. AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.**

**A person can be infected with HIV (or HI virus) but not develop AIDS until many years later. During those years, that person would be what some people call "HIV positive."**

**This brochure covers basic but important questions about HIV and AIDS.**

**Updated!**

**Workplace basics... HIV & AIDS**  
Basic but important facts about HIV transmission and risk associated with AIDS in the workplace.  
**#B045**

**AFTER 20+ YEARS 20 things we know about HIV & AIDS**

**More than two decades after the appearance of a new disease, guidelines were first reported in the United States of America, AIDS is now recognized all over the world.**

**In South Africa it is often referred to as a "pandemic" – an epidemic that affects a high proportion of the population. Although it has also been referred to as an "epidemic" epidemic, which means it has spread rapidly, it is not contagious and it has not been reported in South Africa.**

**In this brochure some of the general health-related HIV and AIDS as people. Although HIV is referred to as "AIDS" in this brochure, remember that this actually refers to any, diagnosed, or undiagnosed, human immunodeficiency virus infection.**

**Updated!**

**After 25+ years 25 things we know about HIV & AIDS**  
This brochure summarises in point form some of the more critical aspects of HIV and AIDS that everyone should know.  
**#B077**

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**Remember to get your flu shot early!! Flu brochures in stock**

**HIV-POSITIVE... Is it better to know?**

**Many, many people in South Africa have been infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV or HI virus). Many of these people have gone on to develop AIDS, and have died.**

**This is only one side of the story however. Many other infected people are living healthy and happy lives – even though they know that they are HIV-positive.**

**A number of people who suspect they have been exposed to the HIV virus don't know if they should have the HIV test or not. It is a major decision to make and one that takes a lot of courage.**

**Some people say that once you know you're positive, that's when you are more likely to give up hope and die anyway, so it's better not to know.**

**Others say that once you know you're positive, that's when you can really take control of your life, make sure you live as long as possible, and that you get the most out of the life you have left.**

**Voluntary Counselling & Testing (VCT)**

- REINFORCE THE MESSAGE OF A STIGMA FREE SOCIETY**

**HIV-POSITIVE... Is it better to know?**  
This brochure discusses the arguments for and against voluntary testing for HIV.  
**#B063**

**5 IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT... Having an HIV test**

**Having an HIV test is a decision that takes great courage. But knowing whether or not you are infected with HIV is an essential step in taking control of one's life. An HIV test is a blood test to find out if you have been exposed to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).**

**Many people are living healthy and productive lives – even though they know they are infected with HIV – or what is known as being "HIV-positive".**

**One does not necessarily look sick when one is infected with HIV. In fact, a person may look and feel healthy for a number of years after infection. The only way to know for sure if you're infected, or not infected, with HIV is to have a test.**

**No-one can force you to have an HIV test. We call the process of deciding to have the test, and then having one "voluntary counselling and testing" (VCT).**

**Important things... Having an HIV test**  
Provides information you should know before going for an HIV test.  
**#B072**

**HIV-INFECTED... What is a CD4 count and a viral load?**

**White blood cells form a very important part of every person's immune system. We have many different kinds of white blood cells and each kind works in a specific way to protect us.**

**The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV or HI virus) attacks a particular kind of white blood cell known as the CD4+ T lymphocyte, helper T cell, or CD4 cell. Once HIV has destroyed a certain number of these cells, the infected person starts developing various illnesses, which may indicate the onset of AIDS.**

**This viral load is a measurement of how many HI virus particles a person has in their blood.**

**HIV-positive... What is a CD4 count and a viral load?**  
Explains what CD4 cells are and why they are important in managing HIV/AIDS. "Viral load" and what it means is also included.  
**#B065**

**I'm not dirty or bad, I'm just... HIV-INFECTED**

**One of the problems with HIV and AIDS is that it has only been around for about 30 years, and scientists are still discovering new things about it all the time.**

**Another big problem is that HIV is transmitted mainly through sex. Any disease that passes from person to person through sex has been considered "hot" or "dirty" by all cultures through many generations. A good example was the syphilis epidemic, in the last years before antibiotics were discovered. It is worth remembering that even with a total cure for syphilis, it has not been eliminated but is still found all over the world.**

**In this brochure, we look at six different aspects of the stigma that people living with HIV or AIDS have been labelled with.**

**I'm not dirty or bad, I'm... HIV-POSITIVE**  
Confronts the issue of the stigma associated with AIDS, and offers an alternative way of thinking about HIV and AIDS.  
**#B064**

**SOME IMPORTANT THINGS YOU KNOW... Germs & opportunistic infections**

**Germs are all around us in the air we breathe, the ground we walk on, the surfaces we touch. Many different germs exist – bacteria, viruses, protozoa and fungi – to name a few. Some germs are even helpful to humans. Some of these helpful germs are called probiotics and help harmful germs under control. Some of the harmful germs need us to digest food, others make certain vitamins that we need to stay healthy.**

**If they multiply rapidly enough, they can cause us to get sick. People whose immune systems have been weakened, such as people who are HIV-infected, are at greater risk of being infected by harmful germs and even by some germs which would be harmless in people with a fully functional immune system.**

**This brochure discusses some of the infections that usually only occur when a person's immune system is damaged – and what can be done to prevent and/or treat these infections.**

**Germs & opportunistic infections**  
Looks at some of the most common opportunistic infections as well as what one can do to prevent and/or treat them.  
**#B067**

**SOME COMMON QUESTIONS... HIV/AIDS & Antiretroviral drugs**

**Finding out that you are HIV-positive is no longer such a reason for despair.**

**Although there will no cure for AIDS, in the 20 years since AIDS was first recognised, significant advances have been made in treating it and the infections that come with it.**

**Increasingly effective medications are available which can prevent and improve the quality of one's life by preventing or delaying the onset of these infections. These include antiretroviral drugs or ARVs.**

**However, the decision to start taking antiretroviral drugs is a major one, and the timing, benefits and disadvantages need to be carefully considered.**

**This brochure answers some common questions about taking antiretroviral drugs.**

**HIV/AIDS & Antiretroviral drugs**  
This brochure explains why it's so difficult to treat HIV/AIDS with antiretroviral drugs (ARVs).  
**#B068**