



Questions and Answers (Talking to Kids)

Q. Should I talk to my children about HIV/AIDS?

A. Yes, although it may be difficult or uncomfortable it is essential for helping our children learn how to protect themselves from the virus. Before children leave primary school, all have heard about HIV/AIDS in some form. Some of the things our children learn may be correct, while others incorrect. It is important for parents and family members who have the correct information about HIV/AIDS to speak to children so that the correct information can be kept and learnt.

Q. What do I say?

A. After asking your children what they know or have heard about HIV/AIDS, you can give answers and explanations attune to their age. For the simplest explanations it is possible to say that the virus is passed from one person to another through four fluids: male sexual fluid, female sexual fluid, blood, and breast milk. Talking with your children will enable them to know how to protect themselves, as well as clearing up any misconceptions they might have heard about the virus. Of course, younger children may just be told that HIV is a virus that makes people very sick. As the children grow older the conversation can become more in-depth. As children reach their teens it is important to also let them know ways they can protect themselves from the virus. Although we would all like to believe our children never are engaging in sexual activities, some are. When they are given the information on how to protect their bodies, whether they are engaging in risky behaviors or not, there is a lower chance they will become infected and also a chance that they will speak to others about HIV.

Q. How can I talk to my children about HIV/AIDS?

A. Because HIV/AIDS is related to sexuality it is often not a topic covered in discussion. One way you might be able to begin a conversation with your children is after seeing a commercial on television or a billboard about HIV/AIDS. Try just asking your children what they heard, who has told them, and their thoughts on HIV/AIDS. Myths about HIV/AIDS can be very scary for children, learning about these myths and offering the correct information to our children will remove fear and stigma that exist in the mind of our children. For example, some people things being around others who are living with HIV is a risk for transmission. Our children may have heard this myth and may not want to play with children who are living with HIV/AIDS. As parents we can clear that misconception up, explaining the ways the virus is transmitted and that playing with children who are living with HIV is okay. Also, we need to speak about this virus many times with our children, just as with all things it takes time to learn.