

## Inspiration corner

Noreen Kaleeba founded The Aids Support Organisation (TASO). This mother of three whose husband had died of AIDS, was so fearless and strong.

TASO is now the largest NGO caring for people with HIV/AIDS in Africa. It has supported over 150,000 people since 1987. Kaleeba has won many prizes for her work.



Let's be inspired by Noreen. Can you think of a creative way to solve a problem in your school or community?



## The Big Question

How many people do you plan to have sex with in your life?

If you are not a virgin, how many partners have you had? If you have had more than one, was it a mistake, a deliberate choice? How many more will you have before you marry? What about after? Send us your honest stories.

**WIN A TERM'S FEES. WRITE TO THE BIG QUESTION, STRAIGHT TALK PO BOX 22366 KAMPALA**



# Would you marry without testing?

In the last Straight Talk, we asked you: **Would you marry without testing for HIV with your partner?**

We received 328 letters from 214 boys and 107 girls. We struggled to choose the winner! But in the end we chose Seth, who is living with HIV, and Lucy from Tororo Town College. They get a term's school fees for their clear and compassionate letters. Another 50 letter writers win T shirts.

Marrying without knowing your HIV status or that of your partner is very risky. Most of you said you would never do it. But it happens a lot. It is one of the drivers of HIV. Make sure you never marry without testing with your partner.



Drivers of the epidemic are those behaviours that are pushing HIV to spread. Having many partners or an untreated STDs are also behaviours that are driving the epidemic.

## Winning letter

I had on and off fever and diarrhoea. Then my parents died. I tested and found out that I have HIV. I would never marry anyone without telling her my status. If I married without testing, it would be very dangerous to her and to me as well.

If the person I want to marry is negative but she does not know I have HIV, I would infect her. I would feel like a murderer!

If she is positive, yet neither of us know, we will end up cross-infecting each other. I would give her my HIV and she would give me hers. Since I am on ARVs, I could even make her virus resistant to ARVs. Then they would not work well for her when she needs to start them. Again I would also be a murderer if I did not tell her and if I did not encourage her to test.

Everyone needs to test for HIV before marriage, since even people who have never had sex can have HIV. Many of us are born with HIV.



**Winner Semugabi Seth** "Living positively may not be easy but it is responsible. This is my second year on ARVs. My skin is smooth and I have a baby face. If we did not test together, you would not know I have HIV."

### Advice to others

If a man and a woman test for HIV and one is negative while another one is positive and they are not married, I advise them to discontinue the relationship. The one who is positive should seek advice on how to live positively.

### Parents

If parents forced me to marry without testing, I would disobey them. Parents need to help their children to test before bargaining for dowry. Some men with HIV entice girls with money on

# NO!

Remember, with every partner you have, your risk of HIV gets bigger! Multiple partners are drivers of HIV.

introduction ceremonies. Some parents are blinded by the gifts and end up exposing their daughters to HIV.

### Healthy

I am getting services from Uganda Cares Masaka. Those of us getting care look healthy. I hope to complete my certificate as a church minister. When my time comes to marry, I will consult my counselors. I will not go anyhow and cause problems to myself and other people. **Seth Semugabi, Grace Bible Church Ministries**

**Star Schools:**  
Hornby SS, Kabale, Comprehensive College, Kitetikka, Wakiso and Excel HS, Ntungamo  
Each wins a foot and net ball.

Read more responses on page 2  
**Straight Talk in Mayuge**



**Journalists for a day: Nassozi Hanifa and Ohafa Anthony interview Cissy Nange of Delta HS. This Straight Talk was edited by students in Mayuge!**

# I must test for HIV before marriage

**Ninety-nine percent of Straight Talkers said they would not marry without testing for HIV. Good!**

**Cannot be sure**

I believe no one is free from HIV apart from me. **Habiyakare M, Hornby HS, Kabale**

**We will be sure of our status**

If we test for HIV together, we can work together to prevent it. **Nakiyingi L, Comprehensive College, Kitetikka, Wakiso**

**Avoid accusations**

If we do not test, in future we may realise we are infected, and each of us will accuse the other. **Atuhaire R, 16, S3, Excel HS, Ntungamo**

**Life is precious**

I value my life more than anything else. **Sanyuka R, Kitante Hill Sch, Kampala**

**I love life**

I would not want to die young. **Mulebi P, S6, King Ford HS, Mukono**

**To avoid problems in future**

Our children would blame us for our irresponsible behaviour. **Nyadoi F, S6, Yale HS, Kayunga**



*Testing together is the only way I can be sure she is negative. G Irankunda, 19, Chairman, ST club, Kisoro Vision School*

**Bad reasons for not testing**  
A few of you said you would marry without testing. Discuss them in your ST Club. What do you think?

**Love**

When you are deeply in love, you feel safe. **Nasiwah B, S4, Comprehensive College Kitetikka, Wakiso.**

**I could be positive**

My parents died of AIDS and if we test, I could be positive and she may dump me. **Muyimbwa E, 18, S4, Comprehensive College, Kitetikka, Wakiso.**

**ARVs**

If I get HIV, I would take ARVs. **Ssebabi E, S5, Jen SS, Jinja.**

*I cannot judge a book by its cover, so I will test with my partner. DF Mande, S6, Chair ST club, Sacred Heart SS, Kabwohe Bushenyi.*

## Reality check

- Love does not make you safe from HIV.
- ARVs do not cure, are expensive and you take them for life.
- Get counselling if you have lost your parents or think you might have HIV.

Many young people get infected with HIV when they have just got married. This is because they do not test before getting together. Testing is the only way you can know if you have HIV. Even if you have been having sex, it is never too late to test.

## I would not marry a partner with HIV

Over 320 Straight Talkers said that if they tested negative for HIV, they would not marry a girl or boy friend who tested positive.

**Save my life**

It would be a good chance for me to know early to save my life. **Natuhwera Jasenta S2, 16, Excel HS, Ntungamo**

**Don't want to suffer**

I saw my mother suffer and die of AIDS. I decided to be very careful with my life. I would rather lose my fiancé than suffer for the rest of my life. **Nanjobe J, S6 Vacist**

**You only live once**

You can fall in love again, but not have life again. **Kampi R, S6, Busoga HS**

## Tough decision

A few of you said you would marry a person with HIV. People with HIV need love and care. When I want to get pregnant, I would go for artificial insemination. **Nakayima M, S6, Busoga HS**

If I have finished introductions, I would marry him and use condoms. **Habiyakare M, Hornby HS, Kabale**

If she accepts to use condoms correctly and consistently, for the rest of our lives. **Wasukira A, Mbale SS**

I would love him provided we abstain from sex. **Namitala P, 16, S4, Comprehensive College, Kitetikka, Wakiso**

If she allows me to get another wife with whom I can have children. **Nyombi S, S1, Luzira SS, Kampala**

Are these ideas realistic? If you decide not to marry a person with HIV, is it discrimination?

- How easy would it be to abstain or use condoms for life?

Discuss all this in your ST club.

And protect yourself from ever facing such tough decisions by delaying sex until you have finished studies and found a serious partner. Remember to test together before you start sex and have sex only with each other. Condoms also help to protect.

## Say NO if parents want you to marry without testing

You are brought up to respect your parents. This is good. But could you disobey them to save your life? Most of you said YES.

**I would refuse**

I would explain to them the dangers in marrying without testing, giving them examples in our community of people who have been infected that way. **Kyokusiima M, 17, S4, Excel HS, Ntungamo**  
When I reach the age of marriage,

I should be able to decide whom to marry. **Achan C, Busoga HS, Kamuli**

My parents drive their lives, I drive mine. **Musana P, 26, Dreamland Bugaaki HS, Kyenjojo**

I would raise the issue with a village leader. **Obwonya Patrick, Day Star Christian Based SS, Hoima**

I would take my parents to court. **Alinaitwe J, 15, S2, Ibaale SS, Fort Portal.**



Bukedde, December 2, 2006

**I would obey my parents**

Maybe my parents trust the girl. **Elweru E, Kampala Editor:**  
*Elweru, people do not have sex in public that other people get to know and many children are born with HIV. "Trust" does not protect from HIV.*

*Left: This girl agreed to marry if her boyfriend tested for HIV. But he refused. Her parents then insisted on going ahead with the introduction. At the event, the girl took the microphone and announced that she would not marry him! Good family discussion and HIV testing would have prevented this confusion.*

# Winner No 2



Lucy A, Tororo  
Town College

**We liked Lucy's letter because she knows it would be painful to leave a boyfriend just because he had HIV. She is also aware of STIGMA and the need to comfort him.**

**"I would console him so he does not feel discriminated against. He also needs to know my love for him was not just fun. I advise him to look for a lady of his status. I cannot marry him."**

# HIV testing is smart

This *Straight Talk* was edited by 15 students from Mayuge. They were journalists for a day! Here are their interviews with students from **Rena College, Bunya SS and Delta HS on testing for HIV.**

## Why I have not tested

I could be positive and lose my girlfriend. **KI, S1, 14, Delta HS**

I fear the results. Many children are born with the virus. **GM, 15, S3, Rena College**

## Don't know why

I am not sure of the logic behind testing. **Hasakya Musa, 17, S4, Bunya SS**

## I am abstaining

I have never had sex. **Naikoba Adiya**

I am abstaining and born again. Will only test after S6 with my future wife. **Nalusida A, S4, Rena College**

## I fear my parents

In P7 I had sex and got candida. My parents took me for treatment. They said they would not pay my fees unless I stopped the relationship with the boy. Now what if I acquired HIV? **TB, S2, 15, Bunya SS**

## Other reasons:

- The health centre is very far.
- I have never had unprotected sex



**"Think critically," says STF trainer Godfrey Walakira to the Mayuge students. "Your life is in your hands and there are no spare parts!"**

- Health workers can talk about me in the village.
- I don't have time

## I have tested

... because my mother separated with my father and she told me he has HIV. I tested negative. **Mukose Felix, S5, Bunya SS**

I tested with my girlfriend and we are both negative. **Maganda Ayubu 17, S4, Bunya SS.**

I had a skin rash which worried me. Out of free will, I had an HIV test. I tested positive. I am abstaining from sex. **WE, 15, S3, Rena College**

## Testing for HIV:

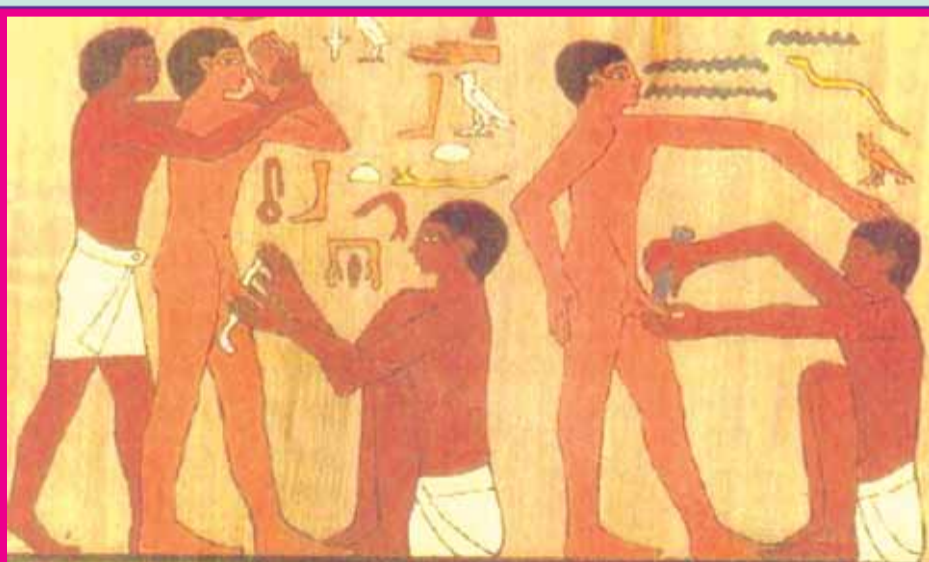
- Gives you peace of mind: You could be worried you have HIV but you do not!
- Is done willingly. No one should force you.
- Is confidential. The results are given only to you. No one else knows.
- Drawing blood does not hurt. It is just a slight prick.
- Comes with counselling before and after the test.

# Male Circumcision: Know about it

Is it true that a circumcised penis has a hard skin that the HIV cannot pass through when you have unprotected sex? **Emonyat R, 16, S1, St Peter's College Tororo** Editor: It is not true!

Is it true that a person who has been circumcised does not get AIDS when he has sex without a condom? **Waswa Alex, 14, S1, Kabaale Sanje SS, Rakai** Editor: It is not true!

Many people say that an uncircumcised person gets HIV more easily than a circumcised one? **Muhangi N, 16, S3, Excel HS, Ntungamo.** Editor: Partly true!



**Male circumcision is an ancient custom. This picture is from the Egyptian pyramids and is 5000 years old!**

Yes, you have many questions about male circumcision. You have started asking because you have heard something new.

The new information is that doctors in Rakai, Kisumu and South Africa have found that males who are circumcised are about 60% less likely to get infected with HIV than uncircumcised males.

## What does this mean for you?

This new finding does not mean that you should run for circumcision or become relaxed

about sex if you are already circumcised. No. For now it only means that you have to keep protecting yourself against HIV, whether you are circumcised or not.

Boys and men who are circumcised can still get HIV. So every boy or man, circumcised or not, needs to delay sex for as long as possible, test for HIV with their partner before starting sex, use a condom, and have as few sexual

partners as possible. The steps to protect yourself from HIV are the same as before.

What *has* changed is our understanding of male circumcision. **Male circumcision** is a surgical procedure that involves partial or complete removal of the foreskin of the penis.

It reduces the chance of HIV infection by removing the delicate

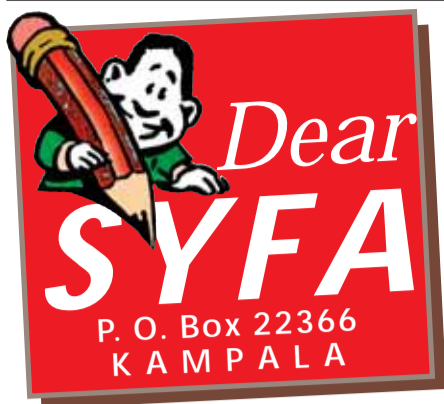
foreskin. HIV likes to enter through the foreskin, especially when it is rolled back. So circumcision reduces the surface area through which HIV can enter.

A circumcised man must heal completely before resuming or starting sexual intercourse. This takes 4-6 weeks. He can still get infected with HIV. So he needs to avoid having many partners and sex with any woman whose HIV status he does not know. He needs to use condoms and test for HIV. He needs to be as careful as an uncircumcised man.

Circumcised men with HIV can pass the virus to women. So a man being circumcised does not protect his female partner.

Female circumcision does not protect against HIV. Female circumcision has no health benefits and is very dangerous to the female.

**This article is by STF staff, Stephen Kasoma, Youth Delegate to the International Consultative Meeting on Male Circumcision in Switzerland, March 2007**



### HIV and withdrawing

Can a male get HIV if he withdraws before releasing sperms?

**Munyezinga R, 19, Kasese HS**

Yes. The boy can get HIV from the female simply by putting his penis in her vagina. He does not have to ejaculate. The virus in her fluids can be enough to infect him. Do not gamble on withdrawing before releasing semen. It is risky for you and the girl.

### Love

There is a girl I love very much. When she is not near me, I fail to concentrate on anything. When she is with me I tremble and cannot do anything sensible even when she tells me to pretend that she is not there. These feelings have totally confused me. Please help me.

**Nabimanya E, 16, S2, Excel HS. Ntungamo**

It is normal to be in love, but you need to find a way of controlling your feelings. Try not to over-focus on the girl you love. Try to look at her like any other person. Also try to get involved in activities like sports to occupy your mind.

### Virginity

Is it true that a girl loses virginity when she rides a bicycle?

**Aimo AD, Buloba SS**

No, virginity is only lost when one has penetrative sex, not by riding bicycles.

### Strange reaction

I have a friend who over reacts when he is seated with girls. His eyes become red. What's up with him? Is he a night dancer? **Becky, Namasumbi SS, Kampala**  
No, he is not a night dancer. This could be due to the feelings he has for the girls. Advise him to control his feelings by engaging in sports and not to think about sex. He should also try to look at girls as his sisters.

### Pregnancy and urination

Is it true that if you have sex with a boy and the sperms (semen) enters your vagina and then you urinate immediately after sex, you can't get pregnant or infected with HIV/STDs? **Batamuliza V, S2, 16, St Lawrence SS, Mityana**

No! The urinary canal is different from the vagina. The urinary track leads to the bladder. The vagina leads to the uterus. These are two systems that never meet. When you have sex, the sperm goes into the vagina and then the uterus. Urine comes from the bladder through the urethra. So, even though you urinate, the sperm will continue their way to the uterus and the fallopian tubes and if there is a mature ovary, it will get fertilised, and you will get pregnant.

### Feelings for opposite sex

Is it true that when you grow up and don't get feelings for the opposite sex, you are abnormal and the only solution is seeing a doctor?

**Namukasa P, Conbert Modern School, Entebbe, Wakiso**

Feelings come with attraction. You



**Hard at work: "What shall we say?" Mayuge students answering Dear SYFA questions.**



**Our journalists from Mayuge: Atalo Hellen, Nekesa Martha, Mutenyo Dickson, Mulungi Ivan and Akongai Grace (Rena College); Ohafa Anthony, Okumu Sam, Kauma Marion, Byogero Musula, and Nuwagaba Greffen (Bunya SS); Walusaga Rogers, Nassozi Hanifa, Kama Abedi, Kauma Susan, Isabirye Sulayi (Delta HS).**

may not have been attracted to anyone yet. Also, your values may not allow you to have that attraction now.

This is however normal and healthy. Concentrate on your studies.

The feelings will come when you are ready.

**Thanks to the student counselors and a special thanks to Rena College, Mayuge, for hosting us.**

# Advice to Myriam

**We received 140 letters advising Myriam. Thanks for your responses. 20 letters win T-shirts.**

**Over 100 letters advised Myriam to talk to her mother. Others told her to be assertive and stand firm against her former teacher.**

## Winning advice

Dear Myriam, life is what you make it. If you keep in the dark, your former teacher will win your soul. But never let anyone take advantage of you over non-issues. God is the giver of everything and will provide your mother with another job if she is sacked. Wake up. You are smelling a rat. **Atugonza**

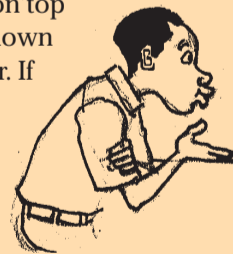
**Meresi, Kasese HS**

Dear Myriam, sorry about the trauma you are going through.



The advice I have is to value your life more than money. When this man comes to your home, keep your distance. Go away from home or to private room until he leaves. If this fails, do not let the issue burden your mind on top of your studies. Sit down and tell your mother. If you have responsible relatives, you can also let them know. Take this challenge as a learning experience. Do not stop fighting. Keep praying as I pray for you. Remember life is precious. Guard it well. **Simon Peter**

**Kakooza, Sacred Heart Seminary, Mubende**



## Other winners:

**Nagawa H, Hoima, Amulen J, Bethel Institute, Iganga, Dfuliga M, Nyangilia SS, Koboko, Nyandoi F, S6, Yale HS, Kampala, F, Khamis, 19, S6, Duhaga SS, Hoima, Kesiime M, 16, S1, Kyakabadiima Parents SS, Kagadi, Kibaale, Ecengu GS, Soroti SS, Atuhaire B, St Gerald's Rukungiri, Ibanda S, MUK, Muhangi N, Kyamate SS, Ntungamo, Dramiga H, Yumbe SS, Hakwa E, Buwembe SS, Busia, Okullu A, Kiryandongo Tec, Inst, Masindi, Nyaburu M, Dede SS, Bugiri and Ndyamahaki D, Rukungiri**

## Advise GMJ

I made my girlfriend pregnant and yet we are both schooling. She wants to have an abortion which is strictly forbidden in my clan. What can I do to save her

future and mine? **GMJ, St Dominic Savio SS Masaka**  
WRITE TO PO BOX 22366, KAMPALA

**Best advice wins ST T-shirt**



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