HEALTH

EDITOR'S NOTE

HIV/AIDS: Even a Christian should adhere to medication

The World Council of Churches and United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS recently had a meeting at which it was noted that some people living with HIV/AIDS are not adhering to their treatment because they have been made to believe that they will be healed by faith alone.

However, both clergy and medical experts have continued to encourage people living with HIV/AIDS to adhere to their medication, which in itself is an act of faith. I encourage you to read our article on HIV/AIDS and faith healing to understand why adherence to treatment is a big step in the fight towards elimination of HIV/AIDS.

We are also continuing with our independence project and our big story in this edition is about how an outbreak of sleeping sickness influenced settlement patterns in eastern Uganda.

I encourage you to continue writing to us to let us know what you think about our stories.

Lillian Namusoke Magezi

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EXERCISE

SIMPLE

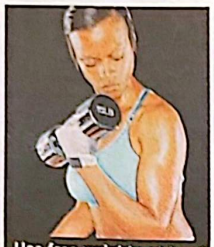
Easy tips to tone your arms

Shapely, sculpted arms are possible at any age. Here are a few tricks to help you get toned arms.

Try yoga
Yoga is great for increasing flexibility, but it also helps tone and shape your arms. The best postures is downward dog and Side Plank.

Standard planks
Standard planks are a great way to strengthen your arms and core, but to take your arm toning up a notch, place one hand on a paper plate.

Keeping your arms straight (and both feet planted shoulder-width apart), circle the plate 10 times clockwise and 10 times counter-clockwise. Switch arms and repeat.



Use free weights at least twice a week to tone

Tricep toners
Combine traditional triceps toners with long-extend moves, such as ball overhead reaches. Start with your shoulders and head on the ball, hips lifted and hands over your chest.

Sit to tone up
Sitting on a Swiss ball strengthens your core and improves posture. Start sitting on the ball with your arms extending at chest height. Your hands should be together, back of wrists touching and thumbs pointing down. Lift arms from chest to eye height for 20-30 repetitions with light weights, keeping your shoulders relaxed and down the entire time.

Do cardio
Burning calories is key to having a sleek, toned body. Walking on an incline of 10% or more can be intense, but try leaning forward and holding on to the handrails to incorporate an arm workout in your 30 to 45 minute trek.

Online sources

TOWARDS ZERO

DR WATITI

I worry I will infect my baby

Q: Dear Doctor,
I am HIV-positive and have been on ARVs for six months. I have a newborn baby, who is three months old and a nurse has told me to stop giving my baby Nevirapine because I am on medication. She has told me the risk of me infecting my baby while on ARVs is minimal even when I continue breastfeeding him. Is this true? I really fear infecting my baby through breast-feeding.

Jane

Continue breastfeeding your baby

A: Dear Jane,
The main reason many children born to HIV-positive mothers get infected with the virus from their mothers either while still in the womb, during delivery or through breastfeeding is because of the mothers having a high viral load. Viral load refers to the amount of HIV in the body of a person living with HIV.

The cardinal goal of putting people living with HIV on ARVs is to suppress their viral load.

Therefore, if your viral load, which should have been checked after being on the drugs for six months is maximally suppressed and it is undetectable, your child should only have been on Nevirapine for six weeks.

However, if the viral load is tested and is still detectable, the child is kept on the syrup for up to 12weeks.

Make sure that you continue taking your drugs as prescribed in the right doses at the right time and continue exclusively breastfeeding your baby even after stopping to give him the Nevirapine syrup.

My sister has painful mouth sores

Q: Dear doctor,
My sister who is HIV-positive and was started on ARVs two months ago has painful sores in her mouth, which are making eating an ordeal for her. She did not have the sores before starting ARVs and we have been wondering whether it is the ARVs, which have caused the problem. What can be done to help her?

Rebecca

A: Dear Rebecca,
The sores in your sister's mouth may not be related to ARVs, as you seem to suggest. Therefore, she needs to be assessed and a proper diagnosis made so that definitive treatment can be instituted depending on the cause of the ulcers.

Stress, which is common among people living with HIV, can cause what are known as stress ulcers. These can make eating an ordeal for anyone who has them. Other causes of oral sores can be a virus known as herpes simplex or Kaposi's sarcoma; a cancer common in HIV infection. In general, make sure she maintains strict oral hygiene by using an antiseptic or salt solution, which she should gargle after brushing her teeth.

She should not swallow the antiseptic or salt solution after gargling. She should also increase her fluid in take and eat small, but frequent meals, which should be soft, therefore, not requiring much chewing.

Aim at making sure she does not get dehydrated and that she takes in enough food to meet her body requirements and keep her strong. Lastly, your sister needs to be counselled concerning her treatment since treatment; also known as antiretroviral therapy (ART) is treatment for life.

If she takes it well with good adherence, she will be able to live a good quality life for a long time without succumbing to AIDS.

Give the child pain killers, such as paracetamol

FIRST AID

Severe abdominal pain in a child with sickle cell disease

Children with Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) often suffer from several complications that often present with chest pain, stomach aches or swollen belly, headaches that do not go away and fatigue.

Sickle cell disease is a blood disorder where a person produces abnormal red blood cells. Dr Sabrina Kitaka, a senior lecturer at the department of Paediatrics, Makerere University College of Health Sciences says severe abdominal pain in a child with SCD is an emergency, it can be caused by infection, micro infacts or thrombus formation in the abdominal organs (Thrombosis is the formation of a blood clot inside a blood vessel, obstructing the flow of blood through the circulatory system or blood pooling into the spleen and it can also be caused by intestinal obstruction. Other causes include constipation, urinary tract infections, peptic ulcer diseases or an inflammation of the gallbladder.

Ashiraf Ssebandeke, the executive director of Action Against Sickle Cell Disease says severe abdominal pain can by caused by sickling in the stomach or enlargement of the spleen.

He says that when the spleen is affected, it is normally better to be removed through surgery, adding that when the spleen is too enlarged, it can be fatal.

Regarding what a parent can do to stop the enlargement of the spleen especially among children with SCD, Ssebandeke says there is nothing that can be done. He, however, says it is important to monitor its size so that in case of enlargement, it is detected early enough and managed by the doctors.

First Aid
Ssebandeke says first aid is by giving pain killers, such as paracetamol (panadol), ibrufen, diclofenac, tramadol and after about 20 minutes, the child will be okay.

He says a caretaker can place a hot water bottle on the stomach until the child feels some relief. After giving home aid and the pain persists, rush the child to a health facility for proper assessment and treatment.

Compiled by Vivian Agaba