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LIVING WITH AIDS

Although the virus has been around for decades, people living with HIV and AIDS are still stigmatised throughout the world. Discrimination in employment, health care, insurance and education, as well as social ostracism and personal rejection are among what victims are subjected to. Ignorance is the prime reason for this discrimination. Lack of understanding of the disease, myths about how HIV is transmitted and prejudice contribute to the way people react towards victims of the disease. Did you know, for example, that kissing a victim won't

infect you? Here's more on HIV and AIDS:

1 You can be HIV-positive and not develop AIDS

2 Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the virus that causes AIDS. It attacks the body's immune system, leaving the body susceptible to a series of illnesses. AIDS is the most serious stage of an HIV infection. With AIDS, the body may not be able to fight infections or diseases like cancer

3 Whether you're a man, woman or child, you can get infected by HIV

4 HIV is spread through oral, anal, or vaginal sex with a person who has HIV and shared drug needles or syringes with a person who has HIV

FALSE	TRUTH
HIV can be passed from one person to another through saliva	People with HIV do not have enough virus in their saliva (mouth fluid) to pass the infection to others. If you kiss someone who has HIV or drink from his or her glass, you will not be infected
HIV can pass through a latex condom	Not when you use a condom the right way. Using a condom blocks sperm and HIV from getting inside someone else
Homosexuals are the only people who get HIV	HIV can infect all people—gay or straight, men, women and children, rich or poor and of every religion or race
If you have tested positive for HIV, you are going to die soon	With treatment, people with HIV can live long, healthy lives

5 Pregnant women can pass the virus to their babies during pregnancy, childbirth, or breast-feeding

6 HIV spreads from person to person through body fluids—blood, a man's semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk. You do not get HIV just by touching or being touched by infected blood or body

fluids
 The virus must get inside you and into your blood. It gets inside you through an open cut or sore on your skin or on a mucous membrane. These membranes are found in the penis, vagina, anus, rectum, mouth and eye

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