



**me and my world**  
a workbook for lifelong learners

# me and my world

a workbook for lifelong learners

1.	being human	1
2.	about your body	13
3.	the facts about hiv/aids	39



# Being Human



One of our most basic needs as human beings is to feel that we are not alone, but are part of a family and community that will support us when we need it. We also need to feel that we can support others when they need us and that we can contribute in a positive way to those around us.

1.

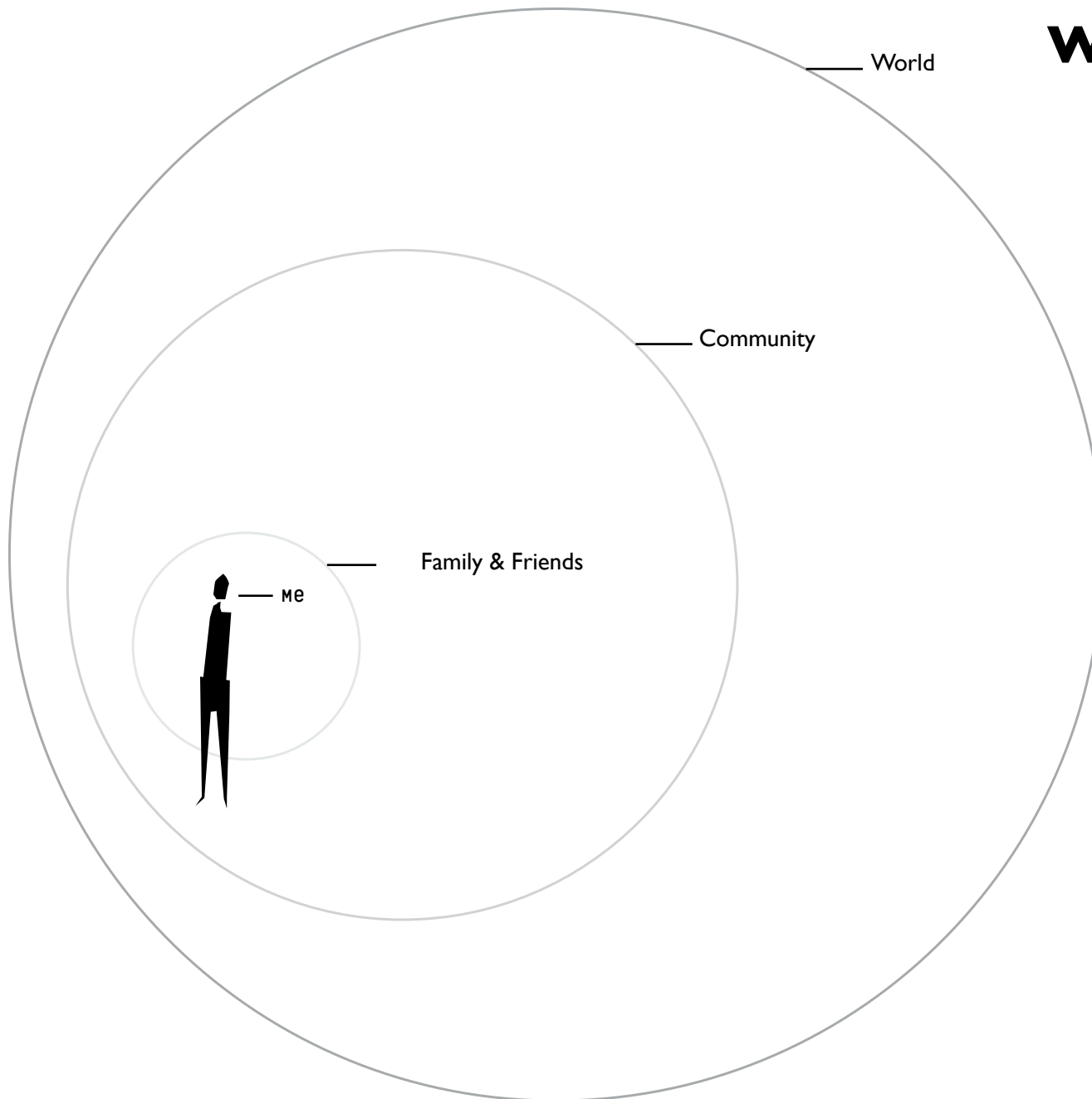
In this first lesson, we discuss what it means to be human and what needs and wants we have as human beings.

## Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- ✧ Explain what makes us human
- ✧ Describe human needs and wants
- ✧ Identify what we need to live in healthy ways

# What makes us human?



## ACTIVITY 1

1. Think about these questions:

What do you think makes us human?

What and who is important and meaningful to you?

2. Start your own scrap book.

- ⊕ Show the circles of people whose lives you affect and who affect you.
- ⊕ On the next page, or in a separate book, glue in a picture of yourself and decorate the page, showing things that you need and that are important and meaningful to you.

## activity I - circles



Here are some answers that other people have given about what makes us human. Add your own to this list:

- ♿ Humans can plan ahead.
- ♿ We can help others.
- ♿ We can think.
- ♿ We can talk.
- ♿ We can form relationships.
- ♿ We have different emotions.
- ♿ We want to eat tasty food.
- ♿ We wear different clothes and fashions.
- ♿ We have a sense of humour.
- ♿ We can create things.



As human beings, we have certain things in common:

- ♿ We each have a physical body which carries us around in the world.
- ♿ We each have a mind that is capable of creating thoughts and objects, communicating in a specific way, planning actions in advance, working with others, solving problems, making decisions, and so on.
- ♿ We each have emotions or feelings which affect the way we see and feel about ourselves and others.
- ♿ Many people believe that we each have a spirit which connects us to each other and to a Higher Power of our understanding.



# What do we need?

As human beings, there are certain things that we cannot live without. These are called our basic human needs. Food, water, shelter, and clothing are examples of basic human needs.

There are also things we want. We can survive without these things, but they make our lives easier and more comfortable. Examples of these items include televisions, radios, and mobile phones.

## ACTIVITY 2

➤ Read the words in the box below. Some are needs and some are wants.

water	meat	shoes	house	toilet
rest	television	children	religion	tarred roads
hot water	electricity	friends	education	work
clinics	doctors	love	safety	good soil
bath	nice clothes	medicine	sports	money
healthcare	making your own decisions			

- In your scrapbook, or in the table on the next page, reorganise the words into two columns, and add other things you need and want.
- Then tick the needs that you have that are currently met or satisfied. Think about your needs that are not met. How does this affect you? What happens when you don't get enough food? How do you feel when it seems that your family does not love you? Or that the people in your neighbourhood reject you or are unsupportive?

activity 2 - needs and wants

needs

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## All people share the same basic needs.

A man called Manfred Max-Neef said that all people have the same nine basic needs, no matter how old they are, where they come from, or how rich or poor they are. Each need is just as important as the other. These nine basic needs help a person to be happy and healthy:

- 🧑 Self-worth: We all need to feel happy in ourselves, worthwhile as human beings, and useful to others.
- 🧑 Freedom: We need to be free to make our own choices and decisions.
- 🧑 Survival: We need food, shelter, and water.
- 🧑 Love: We need to love and be loved.
- 🧑 Safety: We need to feel safe, secure, and not in danger.
- 🧑 Understanding: We need to understand what is going on around us and for others to understand us.
- 🧑 Creation: We need to work, learn, and make things.
- 🧑 Participation: We need to belong to a group or community, to participate in it, and be involved in decision-making.
- 🧑 Rest: We need to rest, reflect, relax, play, and do nothing.




# How do we meet our needs?

There are different ways we can meet our needs.


Here are examples of how we might meet our various needs:

 Through the things we do.


For example, by earning money we satisfy our survival needs and our creative need to work; through exercising regularly and watching what we smoke or drink, we meet our physical needs.

 Through what we have.

We meet our need for shelter by having a home, and having friendships help us satisfy our need for love and belonging.

 Through what we know.

By learning and understanding more about the world we live in, we meet our need for understanding.

 Through the way we feel about ourselves and others.

We meet our need for self-worth by caring for ourselves and for others.

## ACTIVITY 3

- ➊ On the next page, or on another sheet of paper write down what you do, have, know, or feel about yourself that helps you meet your needs for self-worth, freedom, survival, love, safety, understanding, creation, participation, and rest.
- ➋ How can you improve the ways in which you meet these needs? Make it your goal for the next few months to work on this.
- ➌ Think about each question in the table below. Create your own table and answer the questions for your own life. Here are a few sample answers to the questions to get you started.

What do we need for a healthy body?	What do we need for a healthy mind?	What do we need to feel emotionally happy and good about ourselves?	What do we need for a healthy spirit?	What do we need for a healthy family and community?
Medical Care	Education	No Poverty	Quiet Time	Clean Neighbourhood

Remember that we as human beings all have the same basic needs, even if we are sick.

What do we need for a healthy body?	What do we need for a healthy mind?	What do we need to feel emotionally happy and good about ourselves?	What do we need for a healthy spirit?	What do we need for a healthy family and community?





# about your body

2.

HIV attacks and weakens the immune system in the body – the very system that protects and defends us against diseases. Once a person is infected with HIV, the virus can grow more rapidly if the person does not take care of his or her health and living conditions.

For example, in polluted environments where germs and diseases are widespread, the person who is infected with HIV is more likely to pick up diseases and infections. The virus will also grow more rapidly if the person eats improperly, does

not get enough rest or exercise, or drinks or takes illegal drugs too much. A basic need is to keep the body, mind, and spirit healthy, and you need to live in a healthy environment to do so.

In this lesson, you will think about what good health means to you and what you need to live in a healthy way. You will also learn about where disease comes from and how it is spread. Using our information as a starting point, you will create a list of your health needs.

## Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- ✎ Explain what good and bad health means to you.
- ✎ Give examples of what you need to live in a healthy way.
- ✎ Describe where disease comes from and how it is spread.
- ✎ Compile your own health diary.
- ✎ Think about your mental health.



# What is Health?

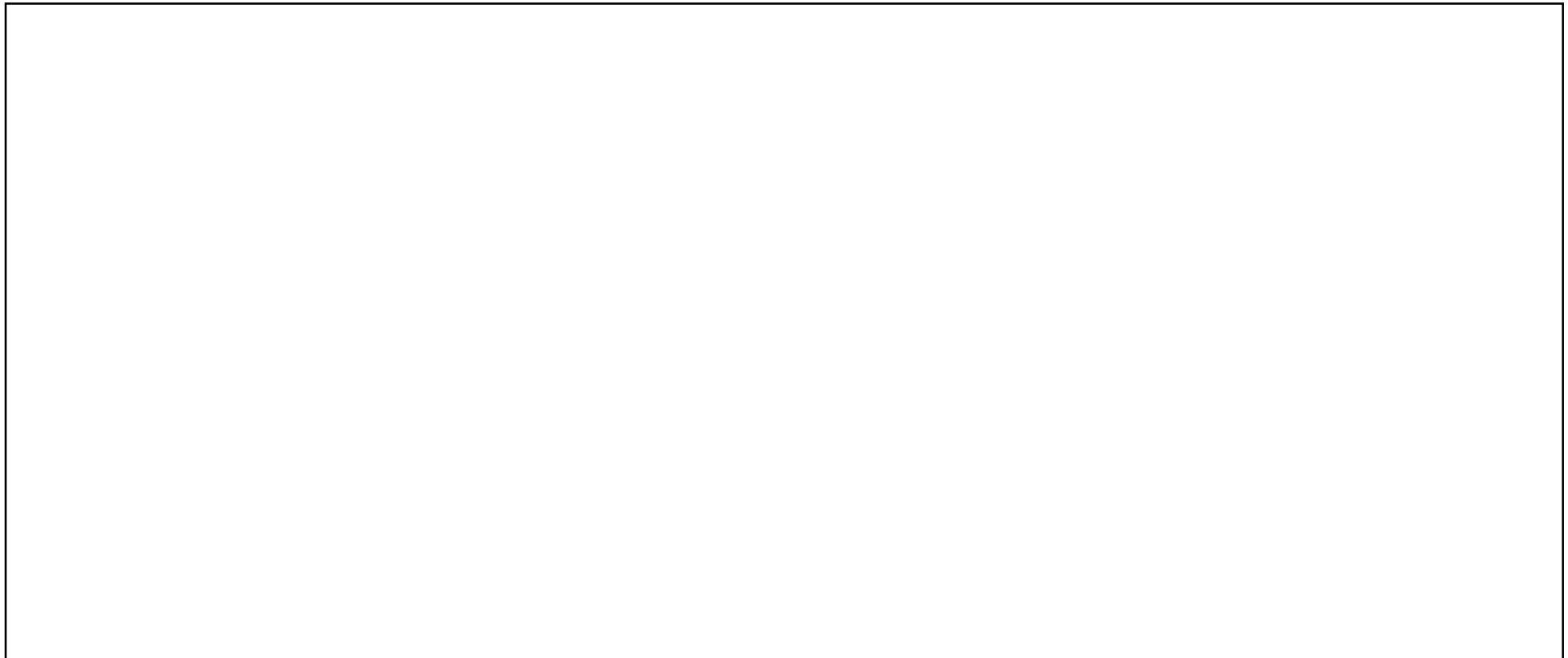
## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

When you hear the word 'health' what do you think of?

Are you a healthy person? Why or why not?

## ACTIVITY 1

- ⊕ List a few things that can stop you from being healthy?



Here are some ideas about what health means:



The health of the body, mind and spirit depends on many things.

For example:

- ☹ We need to have enough money so that we can eat the right food which will help our bodies can fight off diseases. We can become sick if we worry all the time about money.
- ☹ We need to live in a clean and unpolluted environment where germs and disease do not spread. Additionally, we need to maintain good proper hygiene and keep ourselves clean.
- ☹ We need access to services such as electricity, transport, sewerage systems, and clean water. We also need access to health services and medicines, as well as to information and education.
- ☹ We need the help and support of our family, friends, and neighbours. Our health can suffer if we feel rejected or unwanted by others, or if we live in a family or community where there is a lot of conflict and violence.

All these conditions are linked together, like a chain. Each link affects the person's health. For example:

- ☹ Siphon lives in unhealthy circumstances where there are no proper toilets or sewerage system.
- ☹ Germs grow and spread in these conditions.
- ☹ In winter, Siphon's immune system is low and he gets Tuberculosis (TB).
- ☹ He is so ill that he cannot look after himself.
- ☹ He cannot work and so has no money for nutritious food or medicines.
- ☹ Siphon's TB becomes worse.
- ☹ No one in the community takes care of Siphon and his chain of illness goes on and on like a never-ending cycle.
- ☹ Eventually Siphon dies.

## How do we break this cycle?

Doing just one thing could have changed the whole cycle of Siphó's disease. For example, he could have worked together with his community to build proper toilets, to clean up the environment, and to demand proper services. It is usually best to first tackle the conditions that are easiest to change. For example:

- ☛ It is easy for people to learn how to clean their water before they use it for cooking or drinking.
- ☛ It is easy for people to learn to grow their own herbs and vegetables so that they always have nutritious food
- ☛ It is easy for people to learn that TB can be cured if you go to the hospital and continue taking your medicines.

We each need to start by taking responsibility for our own health by understanding where disease comes from and how it spreads. In this way we can help reduce some of the things that make it easier for germs, like HIV to spread. We can start making conditions healthier for people living with HIV so that it takes longer for the condition to develop into AIDS.

## How does disease spread?

Disease spreads in different ways. For example:

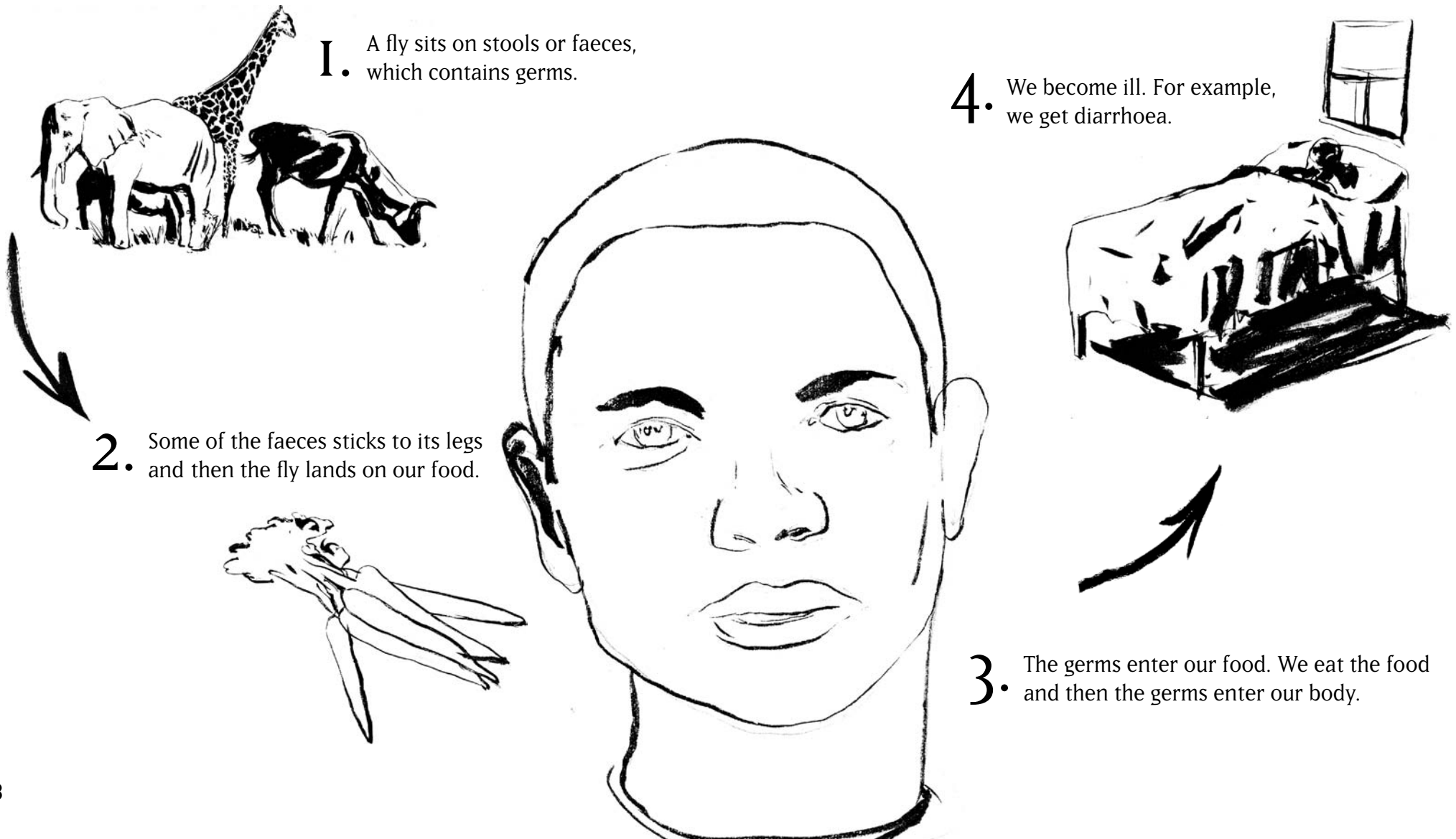
- ☛ Some diseases are spread through infections caused by germs, e.g., TB.
- ☛ Some diseases are spread by animals and insects, e.g., malaria is spread by a particular type of mosquito.
- ☛ Some illnesses are caused by injuries.
- ☛ Some are caused by the way we live or the conditions we live in, e.g., we can become sick because of stress caused by the problems we have.

## Germs cause disease!

Germs are so small that we cannot see them, but they are all around us.

They are in the air we breathe, the soil we work with, the food we eat, and the water we drink.

Here are two examples of how easily germs spread. {Start from number 1 and then follow the arrows.}



1. After using the toilet, we do not wash our hands with soap and water.



2. We are now carrying germs on our hands.

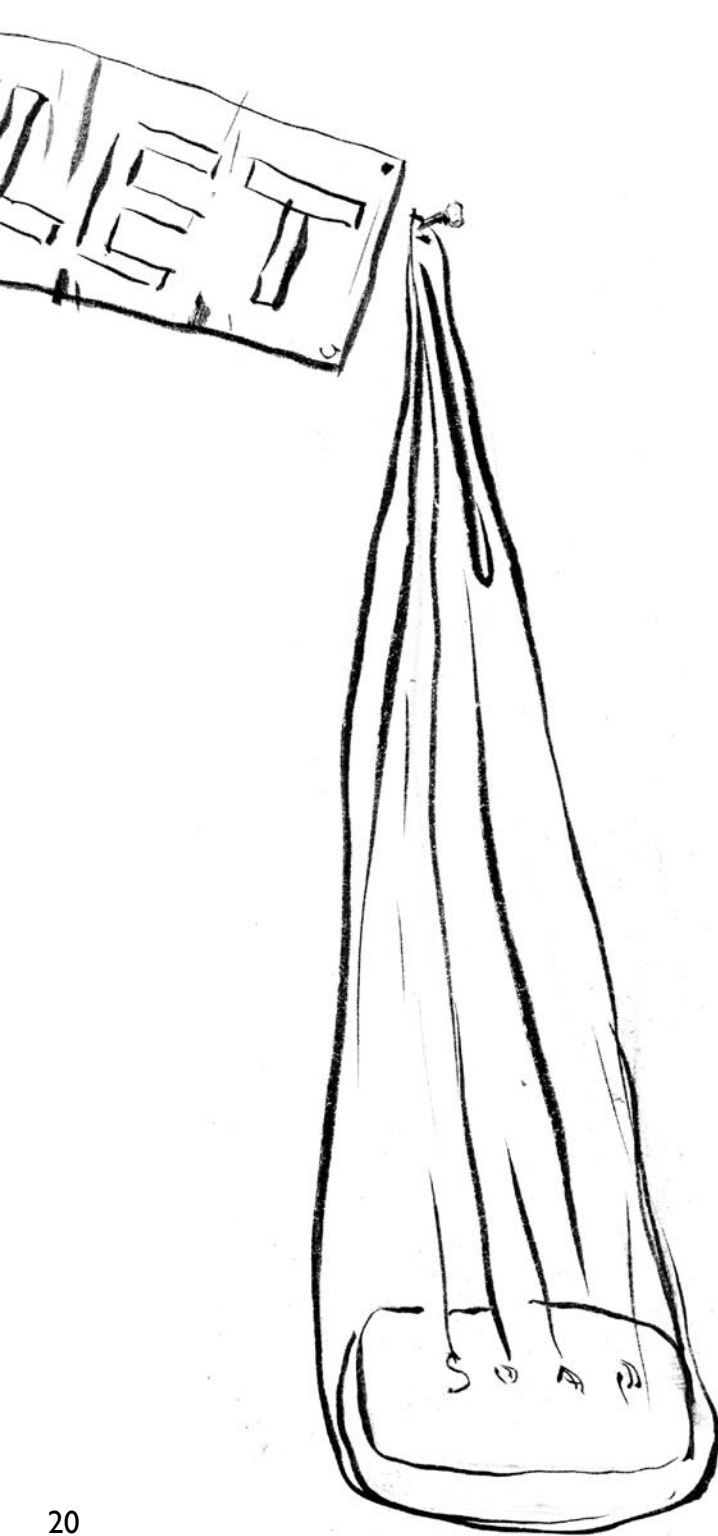
3. We prepare food and the germs are passed on from our hands.



4. Our family eats the food that we have prepared and they become ill.



Germs spread easily and quickly in dirty, damp, warm, and overcrowded conditions. They spread when dirty knives are used during circumcision, or in home birth when the umbilical cord is cut. Once germs enter the body, they can become dangerous. Think about how this affects people living with AIDS.



## ACTIVITY 1

🕒 Work on your own. Tick true or false for each statement below

<b>Germs get into our bodies in the following ways:</b>	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
1. You breathe in germs through your nose or mouth.		
2. You get germs when someone sneezes or coughs on you.		
3. You get germs from washing with water and soap.		
4. You get germs from drinking dirty water.		
5. You get germs from eating meat or chicken that is not cooked enough.		
6. Children get germs from teething.		
7. You get germs from eating food that is left uncovered for a while.		
8. Germs enter your body through cut or broken skin.		
9. You fall on something dirty that cuts your skin and gives you germs.		
10. Germs can enter your body when you have sex with someone who has a sexually transmitted disease, like HIV/AIDS.		
11. Germs are passed on to you through someone else's blood.		
12. If you shake someone's hand and then touch your eye you can get germs.		
13. You get HIV/AIDS when a mosquito bites you.		
14. Some germs don't enter your body, but stay on your skin and give you a rash.		

All the above sentences are true, except for numbers 3, 6 and 13.

## How does the body defend itself against germs?

Your body is a fighting machine. It defends itself from the outside.

- Your skin stops germs entering your body.
- The little hairs in your nose stop germs entering your body.
- The skin in your mouth and throat stop germs entering your body.
- Your tears get rid of germs near your eyes.

Keeping your body, home, and environment clean is the most basic health habit and the best way to protect yourself, your family, and others from germs and disease.

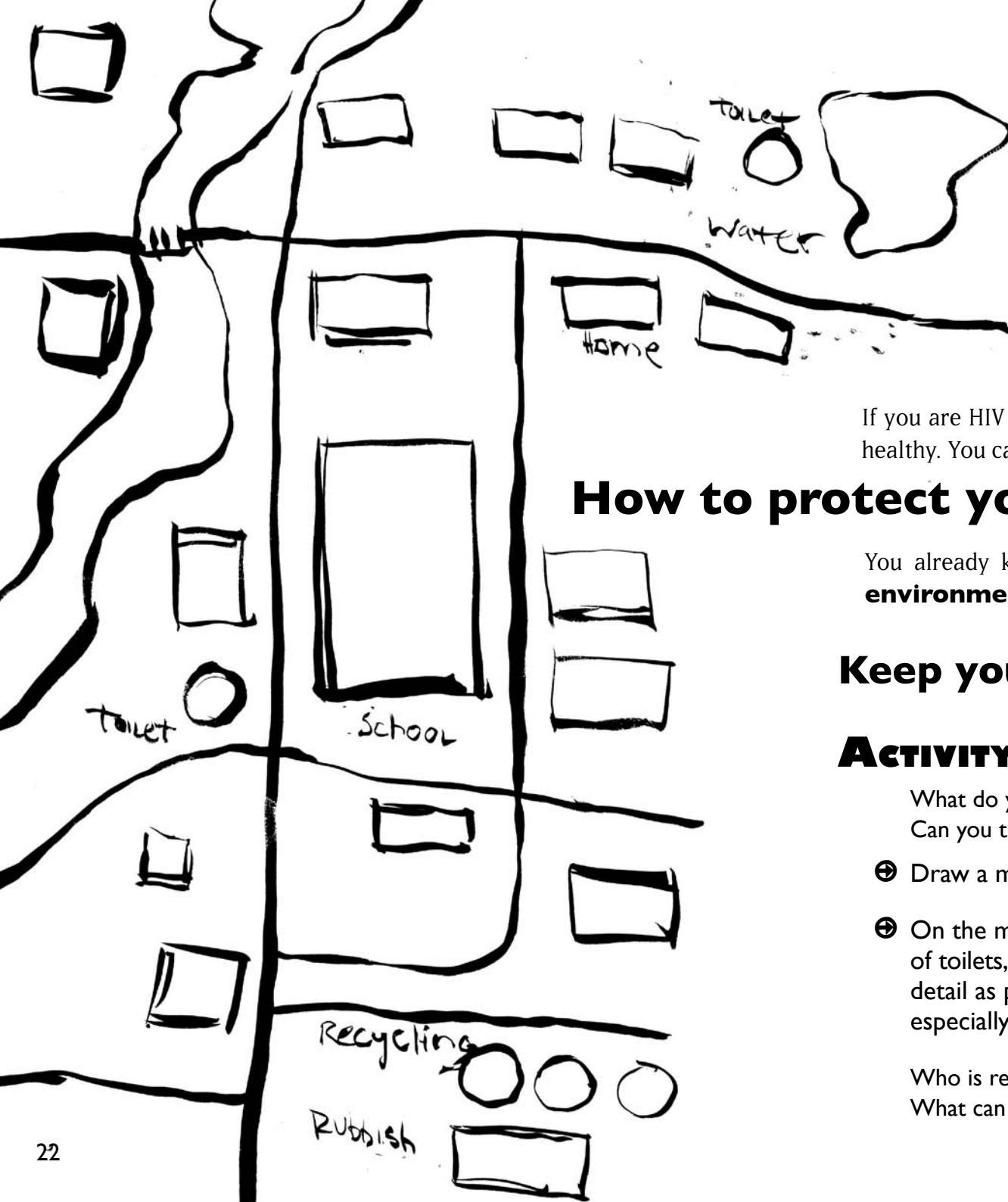
Your body also defends itself from the inside. Your body has its own army that fights off germs and helps you heal after an illness. This army is the immune system. Babies are born with an immune system that grows and develops. The mother's immune system is passed onto the baby through the breast milk.

The immune system is made up of white blood cells. These are like soldiers. They pick up any germs that enter the body and make special antibodies to fight these germs. They make different antibodies to fight different germs. They make one kind of antibody to fight measles, and another to fight flu.

All these antibodies remain in your body even after you have recovered from the illness. They continue to protect you from that illness. This means that if these germs enter your body again, the antibodies to fight the germs already exist and can do battle immediately to kill these germs. You can also build up your immune system by eating the right food and by living a healthy life.

But the germ that causes HIV attacks a person's immune system so that the white blood cells cannot make enough HIV antibodies or strong enough HIV antibodies to fight HIV. Also, HIV keeps changing so quickly that the body cannot make enough or strong enough antibodies to destroy it. Gradually, the immune system itself becomes too weak to protect the body from other diseases.





## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Think about these questions:

Why do people who are HIV positive get sick?

Why doesn't the body make enough antibodies that are strong enough to fight HIV?

How can an HIV positive person keep strong?

If you are HIV positive, you can do things to keep your immune system healthy. You can protect yourself from the outside and from the inside.

## How to protect yourself from the outside

You already know that the most basic health habit is keeping your **environment**, **home**, and **body** clean. Let's look at each one.

### Keep your environment clean

#### ACTIVITY 2

What do you think is meant by an unhealthy environment?

Can you think of some examples of these conditions?

- ④ Draw a map of your street or neighbourhood.
- ④ On the map, show the houses, roads, water sources, location of toilets, and where people dump their rubbish. Put in as much detail as possible about living conditions in your community, especially those that are unhealthy.

Who is responsible for keeping the environment clean?

What can you do to motivate people around you to clean up?





## Your Water

Many people throughout the world cannot get enough clean, safe water. Often, their water is polluted with litter, waste, and chemicals. Polluted water kills plants, fish, animals, and people. It encourages germs to grow and spread, and causes diseases like cholera, diarrhoea, typhoid worms, and bilharzia. That is why it is so important to protect the rivers and springs that give us clean water.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Is your water clean and safe to use? Why do you say so?

Do you need to clean your water before you use it?

How do you do this?

Do any animals drink from your water source?

Where do you store your water?

Do you collect and store rain water in tanks or buckets?

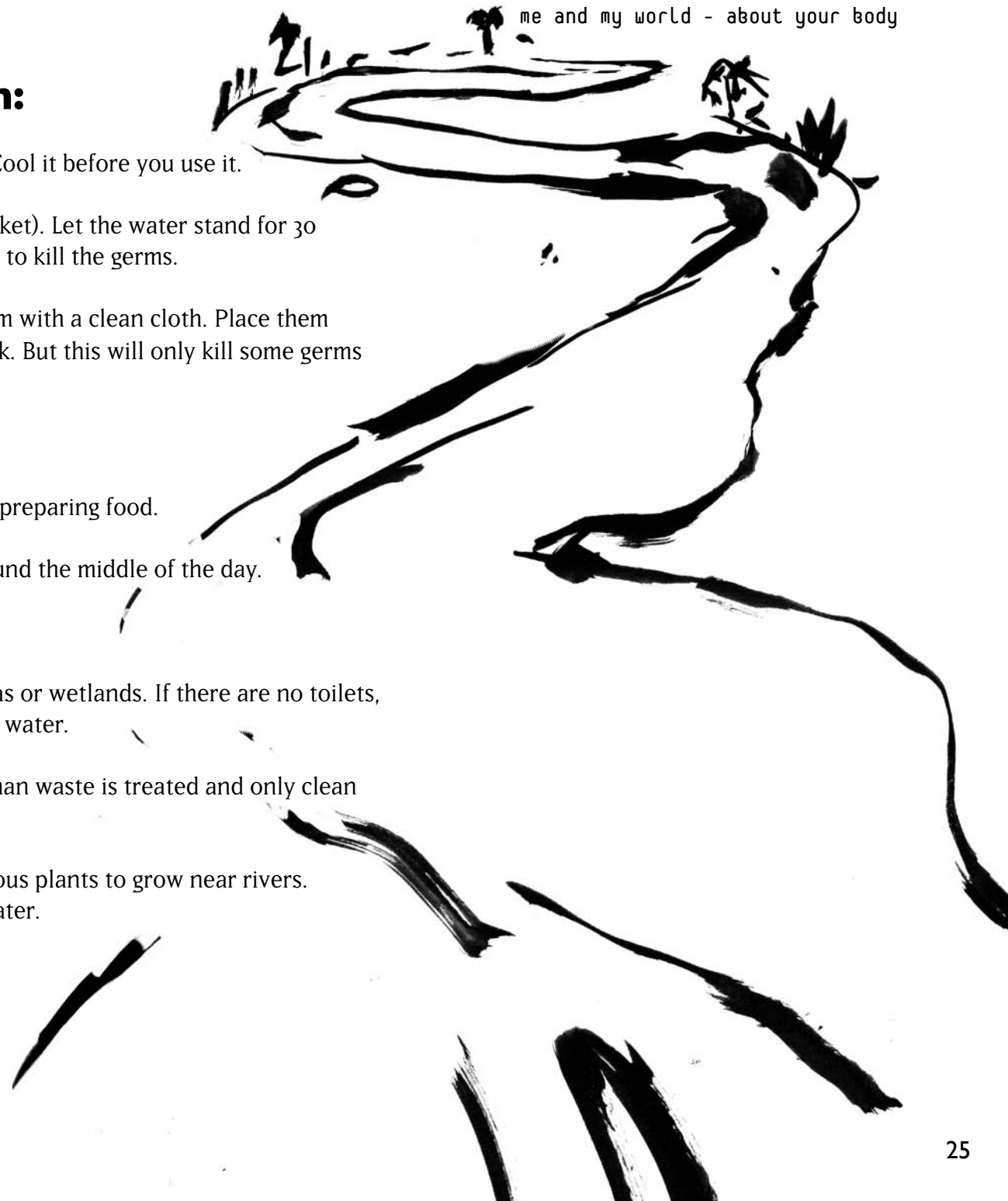
Where do you throw your waste water?

How can you keep water clean for drinking?

People in different communities get their water from different sources such as rivers, springs, wells, rainwater tanks, or taps. Some sources are protected. This means they are closed so that people and animals cannot get to them. The water from these sources is safer to use than the water from unprotected sources which is open so that animals and people can access it. Any water from an unprotected source must be cleaned because germs and carriers of disease breed and spread in it.

## How to keep your water clean:

- ☞ Boil your water for at least 10 minutes to kill germs. Cool it before you use it.
- ☞ Add one teaspoon of bleach to 5 litres of water (1 bucket). Let the water stand for 30 minutes before using it. This will give the bleach time to kill the germs.
- ☞ Fill clear plastic containers with water and cover them with a clean cloth. Place them in the sun. After 4 to 6 hours the water is safe to drink. But this will only kill some germs and worm eggs.
- ☞ Wash all fruit and vegetables with boiled water.
- ☞ Wash your hands after going to the toilet and before preparing food.
- ☞ Collect water from fast-flowing parts of the river around the middle of the day.
- ☞ Do not urinate in rivers and streams.
- ☞ Build proper toilets away from rivers, catchment areas or wetlands. If there are no toilets, bury all human waste and toilet paper away from the water.
- ☞ Develop a proper and safe sewage system where human waste is treated and only clean water is allowed back into the river.
- ☞ Remove and control alien plants. Only allow indigenous plants to grow near rivers. These act as a natural filter and can help clean the water.



We can get many diseases from unclean water. Examples of diseases that will cause diarrhoea include gastroenteritis, cholera, typhoid, and dysentery.

### Signs and symptoms of diarrhoea:

- ☞ The child or adult passes more than two or three watery stools a day.
- ☞ The stools look and smell different.
- ☞ You may also vomit and have a swollen stomach with cramps.

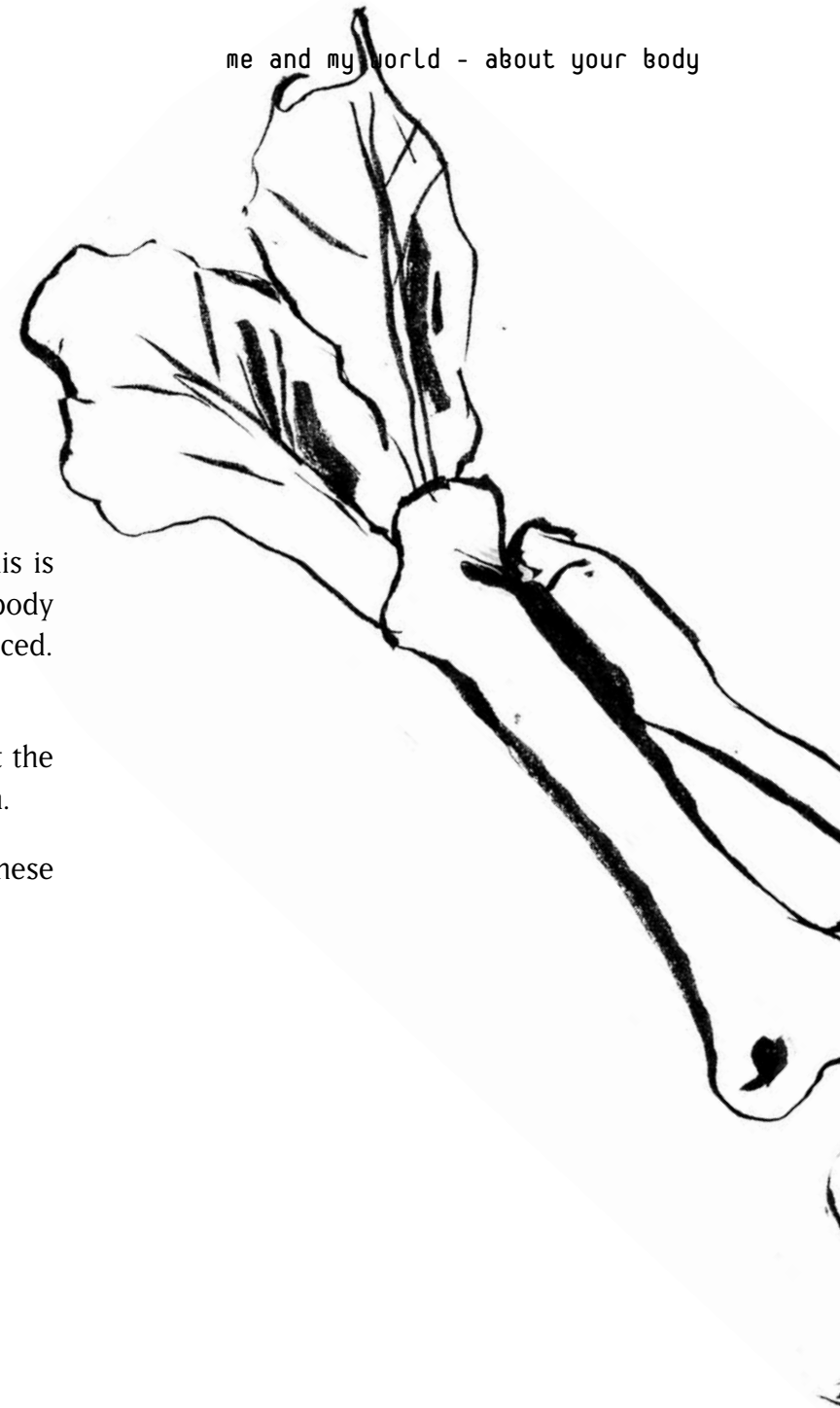
### Treatment:

Each time you pass a watery stool your body loses water and important body salts. This is called dehydration. The body can dry out and die if dehydration continues. The human body needs water to survive, just like plants. Water that is lost from the body needs to be replaced. Every year many babies die of dehydration.

The best treatment is to give  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or 1 cup of the Oral Rehydration Therapy throughout the day to replace water and salts lost by the body. It is best to sip or drink it with a teaspoon.

Urgently and immediately take a baby to the hospital or clinic if he or she shows any of these signs of dehydration:

- ☞ The soft spot on his head is sunken.
- ☞ The mouth and tongue are dry.
- ☞ The eyes are dull and sunken and have no tears.
- ☞ The baby passes very little urine and it's dark yellow in colour.
- ☞ He or she has less than 6 wet nappies a day.
- ☞ The baby is thirsty, but too ill and weak to drink.
- ☞ The skin is wrinkled and when you pinch it, it remains raised for a few seconds.
- ☞ The baby's breathing is fast and deep.



## Your waste

### What do you think?

Why is waste a health danger?

How do people in your community get rid of their waste? Is this the safest way?

In areas with a very hot climate, you need to get rid of waste every day because germs live and grow in waste. Waste can also be dangerous, e.g., if it consists of needles, medicines, bottles and other dangerous objects.

Ideas for getting rid of waste safely

- ✂ It is best if your waste is collected regularly by your local council and disposed of safely.
- ✂ Bury or burn your waste. Do this in a safe place away from the house and from water sources. Do not burn on a windy day as you can spread fire. Do not burn plastic because the fumes are poisonous.
- ✂ Sell or re-use glass, paper, tins, or cans.
- ✂ Dig bones, vegetable peels, old food, plants, and other living matter into your vegetable garden.
- ✂ Never throw waste near or in water sources as they will get polluted and cause serious illness, such as diarrhoea.
- ✂ Recycle your waste. Make a compost heap in your garden using vegetable and kitchen scraps and work the compost into the soil. If you do want to start a compost heap, make sure it is well covered to stop rats from getting to the scraps.



## Toilets and sanitation

In some communities, each household has a toilet. In others, they share toilets. Sometimes there are no toilets and people use the bush instead. Sometimes people go near a house, spring, or river where there is a danger of passing on germs. Every household should have a toilet to prevent the spread of disease. Any type of toilet is fine as long as it is kept clean. Teach everyone, especially children, to use the toilet correctly and to wash their hands afterwards.

### Ideas about sanitation

- ✎ Use toilet paper or other suitable paper so that you do not pass on germs.
- ✎ Do not go to the toilet near or in water sources, or close to the living area.
- ✎ People who go to the toilet just anywhere are spreading diseases through faeces.
- ✎ Keep toilets clean. Scrub the seat once a day with water and soap.
- ✎ Place a bar of soap in a stocking and a water container outside the toilet so that people can clean the toilet after they have used it.
- ✎ Wash your hands after going to the toilet.

You have read some basic ideas about protecting yourself from the outside. What about protecting yourself from the inside?

# How to protect yourself from the inside

You can stop germs making you sick in the following ways:

- ☺ Keep your body and hair clean.
- ☺ Wash your hands with soap and water before eating and after going to the toilet.
- ☺ Wear clean clothes, underwear, and socks.
- ☺ Dry your clothes in the sun because sunlight kills germs.
- ☺ Wear shoes so that you do not pick up germs from the ground.
- ☺ Use the toilet.
- ☺ Use a tissue, handkerchief, or cloth to wipe your nose and throw this in the rubbish bin.
- ☺ Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- ☺ Clean your teeth twice a day.
- ☺ Wash sheets every week and dry them in the sun as germs do not like sunlight.
- ☺ Air blankets, covers, and mats in the sun every week.
- ☺ Keep small livestock such as chickens and pigs out of the house.
- ☺ Do not throw newspapers or sanitary towels down the flush toilet as these make it blocked.
- ☺ Do not spit in or around the house, as this spreads disease.

Another very important way to stay healthy is to eat enough of the right food.  
Food can help build your body's strength and protect you from further sickness.



## ACTIVITY 3

- ⊕ Keep a food diary for one week, like the one below, showing what you usually eat each day.

### Food I usually eat

	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Mid-morning</b>	<b>Midday</b>	<b>Mid-afternoon</b>	<b>Evening</b>
<b>Sunday</b>					

- ⊕ After one week of keeping your food diary, look carefully at it and think about or note your answers to these questions:

What is the main food that you eat each day, e.g., bread, rice, maize meal, grains, cereal?

What fats and oils do you most use, e.g., margarine, oil, butter?

What kind of meat or fish do you eat?

What fruit and vegetables do you eat?

Which dark green and deep yellow vegetables do you eat?

Which beans and nuts do you eat?

Do you use a lot of salt, pepper, garlic, herbs, or Aromat?

What do you mainly drink?

### Food I usually eat

	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Mid-morning</b>	<b>Midday</b>	<b>Mid-afternoon</b>	<b>Evening</b>
<b>Sunday</b>					
<b>Monday</b>					
<b>Tuesday</b>					
<b>Wednesday</b>					
<b>Thursday</b>					
<b>Friday</b>					
<b>Saturday</b>					

## What is healthy food?

The main food that you eat helps your body to grow healthy. But on its own, it does not give your body everything it needs. You must add other foods to your main food to get energy, protection against illness, and to build and strengthen your bones.

Food consists of energy. Energy is like petrol in a car. Without petrol, a car cannot work properly and will stop altogether. Different types of food give our bodies different nutrients. For example, meat gives us protein, bread gives us starch, oil gives us fats, and vegetables give us vitamins. A balanced diet consists of different kinds of food that help you to get all the energy and nutrients your body needs.

As you read think about the different groups of food, think about what you eat and the different groups it fits into.

### Energy food

Some energy food is starchy food like cereal, maize-meal, and bread. It gives the body heat and energy which helps us to walk, run, work, and talk.

A child needs more energy than an adult because they are more active and their bodies are growing and developing all the time. It is best to eat whole wheat or brown bread, whole oats, brown rice, and brown sugar.

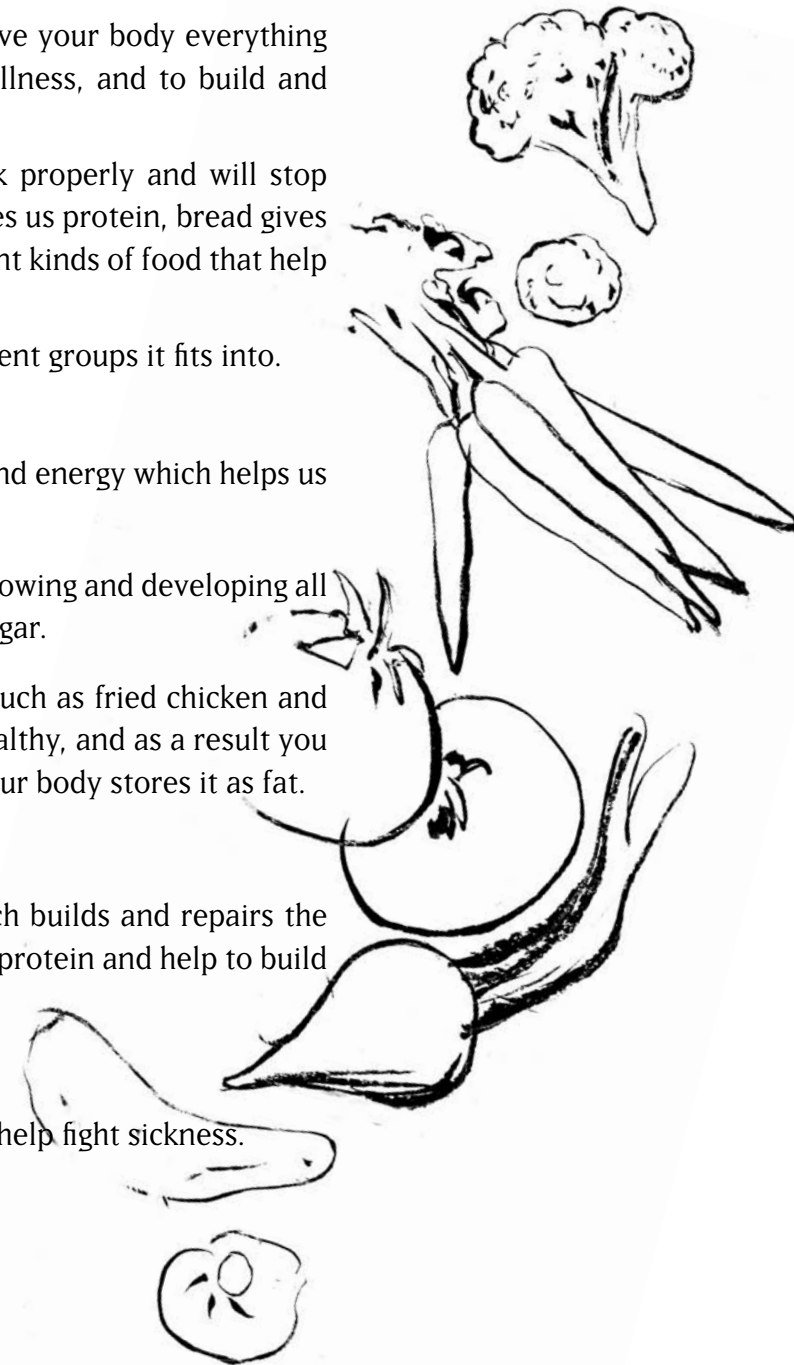
Other energy foods are foods that have fats and sugar. Many foods, especially take-aways such as fried chicken and chips have fat in them, which can make you overweight. Being overweight or obese is not healthy, and as a result you may develop diabetes or heart disease. If you do not use up the energy food you eat, then your body stores it as fat.

### Body building food

Body-building food includes fish, chicken, red meat, and beans. These contain protein which builds and repairs the body. These foods are very important for growing children. Milk and milk products also have protein and help to build strong bones and teeth.

### Food that protects you from illness

Fruit and vegetables have vitamins and minerals to keep your body working properly and to help fight sickness.

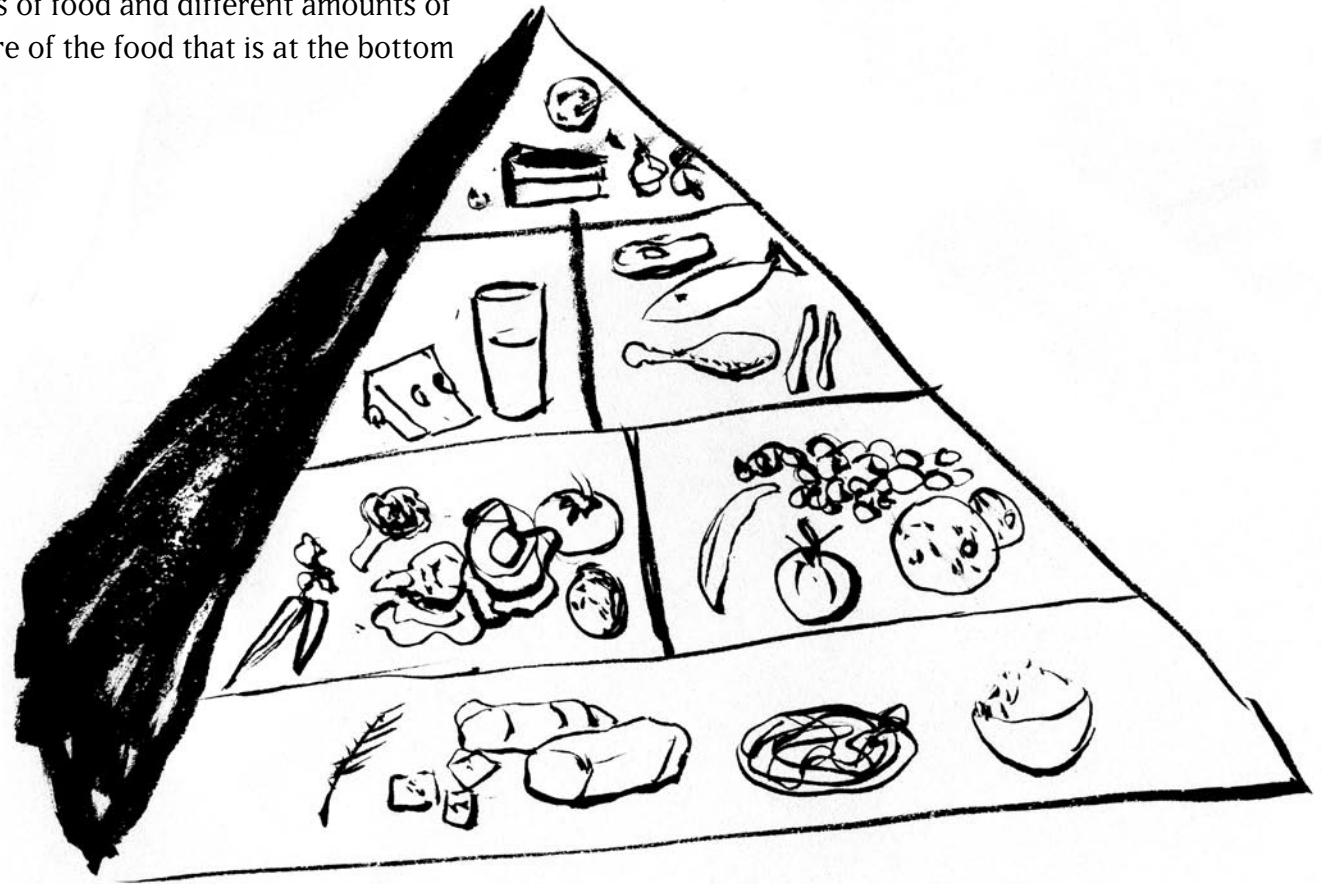


## ACTIVITY 4

- ⊕ Look at your food diary. Compare what you eat with the above food groups. Do you eat food from each food group each day? What could you do to make your diet more balanced? Make note of these changes.

### Eating a balanced diet

A balanced diet includes eating different types of food and different amounts of food. Look at this triangle. You should eat more of the food that is at the bottom of the triangle than the food on the top.



Another thing that can help your body from the inside is your mind and spirit, which is also known as your mental and emotional health.

## Your mental health

Mental health includes how you feel, think, and behave.

### Activity 5

- 🕒 In your scrapbook, or on the next page, draw a picture with yourself at the centre. On one side, draw or write the things in your own life that help your mental health. On the other side, draw or write the things in your own life that harm your mental health.

#### Ideas about mental health

There are many different ways of thinking about mental health.

If our nine basic human needs are met, we are more likely to feel healthy in our mind, spirit, and bodies.

- 🕒 Self worth: We all need to feel that we are worthy people who others value and love. This helps us feel happy in ourselves and useful to others.
- 🕒 Freedom: We all need to be free to make our own choices and decisions.
- 🕒 Survival: We all need food, shelter, and water.
- 🕒 Love: We all need to love and to be loved.
- 🕒 Safety: We all need to feel safe, secure, and not in danger.
- 🕒 Understanding: We need to understand what is going on around us, and for others to understand us.
- 🕒 Creation: We need to work, to learn, to make things.
- 🕒 Participation: We need to feel we belong to a group or community, and that we can participate in and be involved in decision-making.
- 🕒 Rest: We need to rest, reflect, relax, play, and do nothing.

Violence, injustice, abuse, crime, disease, poverty, and unemployment affects our health and our state of mind.

Some people deal with their problems on their own, but most of us need the support and help of others.

Stress and anxiety can lead to mental illness. A mentally ill person needs special help from doctors, social workers, or traditional and religious leaders.



## What Do You Think?

Think about examples of ill health that have happened to you or people you know.

Think about the questions below and how you can get these things so that your health improves:

Do you feel worthy and valued?

Do you feel free to make your own choices and decisions? Do you have enough food, shelter, and water?

Do you love and are you loved?

Do you feel safe and secure?

Do you understand what is going on around you and do others understand you?

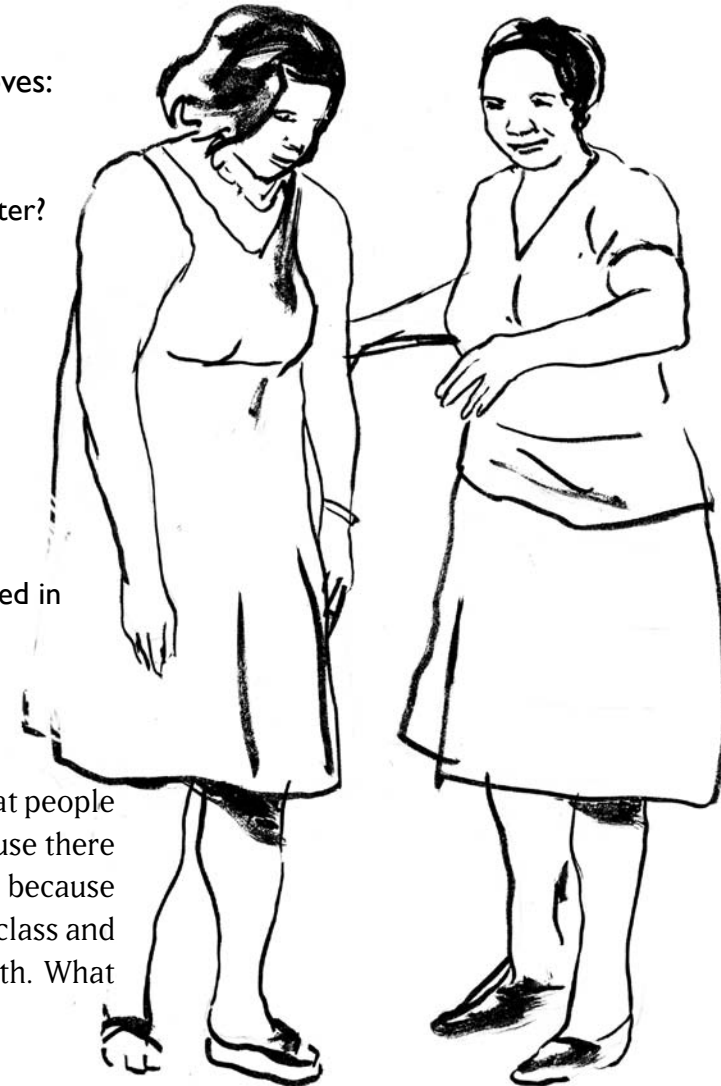
Do you have work?

Are you learning and creating things each day?

Do you feel that you belong to a group or community, and that you can participate in it and be involved in decision-making?

Do you get enough rest and relaxation?

There are many problems associated with unanswered health needs. It is important to remember that people cannot perform well if they are underfed, infected with parasites, or not getting enough sleep because there is fighting in their community. Many children go to school each morning without eating breakfast because their families are too poor to afford basic food. This makes it impossible for them to concentrate in class and this means they do not do well in their exams. This is just one example of the results of bad health. What else can you think of?



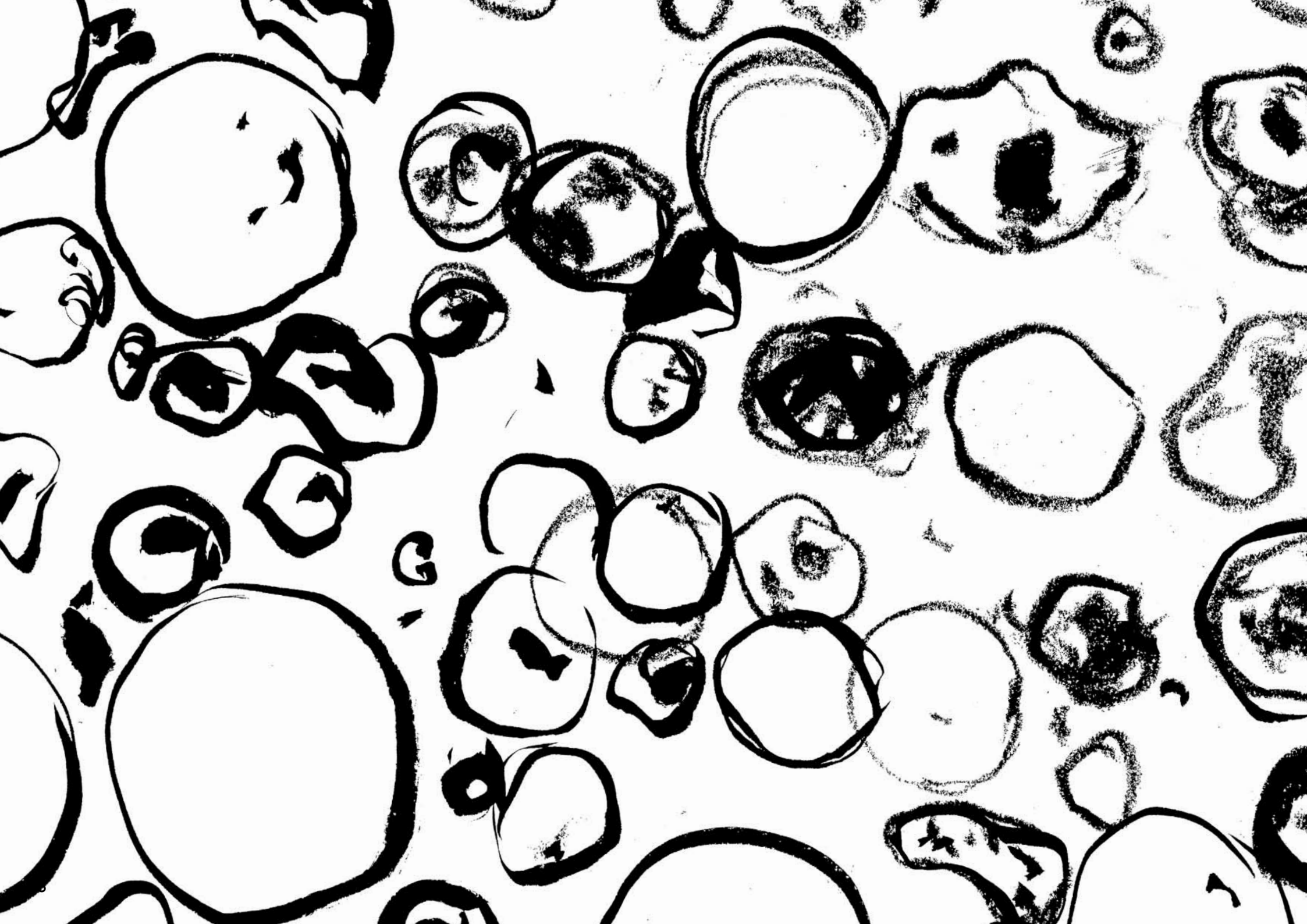
## What do you know now?

Work on your own. Do you know more about the following? Tick yes or no.

	Yes	No
What is meant by good health.		
The conditions we need for good health.		
Where diseases come from.		
How diseases spread and what happens when they spread.		
What is meant by keeping healthy from the outside.		
What is meant by keeping healthy from the inside.		
How to solve your own health needs.		

Read Module 2 again if you are unsure of any of the above topics.







# the facts about HIV/AIDS

## 3.

In this lesson, we discuss the facts about HIV/AIDS – what it is, how it is passed from person to person, and how it is diagnosed and treated. Finally, we look at the ways in which we can keep ourselves healthy even if we are living with HIV and/or AIDS.



### Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain what HIV/AIDS is and how it is passed on, diagnosed, and treated.
- Identify ways that you can keep yourself healthy even if you are living with HIV and/or AIDS.

## About HIV/AIDS

HIV and AIDS are a danger to the well-being of everyone in the world, but especially to people who live in poorer countries. Millions of people have already died from AIDS-related diseases. Children have lost their parents. Communities have lost their teachers, workers, and leaders. Countries have lost people who could help build their nations.

By the end of 2006:

- ⌘ 39.5 million people in the world are living with the HIV virus (this number is the size of a small country or state).
- ⌘ The largest number of people who are living with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa which is the area south of the Sahara Desert in Africa.
- ⌘ Young women and girls are at greatest risk of getting HIV, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Every day we hear that HIV/AIDS is getting nearer and nearer to each one of us. Many of us know someone who is living with HIV or with AIDS, or, we know someone who has died from an AIDS-related disease. There are many people who may be wondering if they are HIV positive, but are too scared to find out. If we know the facts about HIV and AIDS then we are better prepared to deal with the disease.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What HIV is?

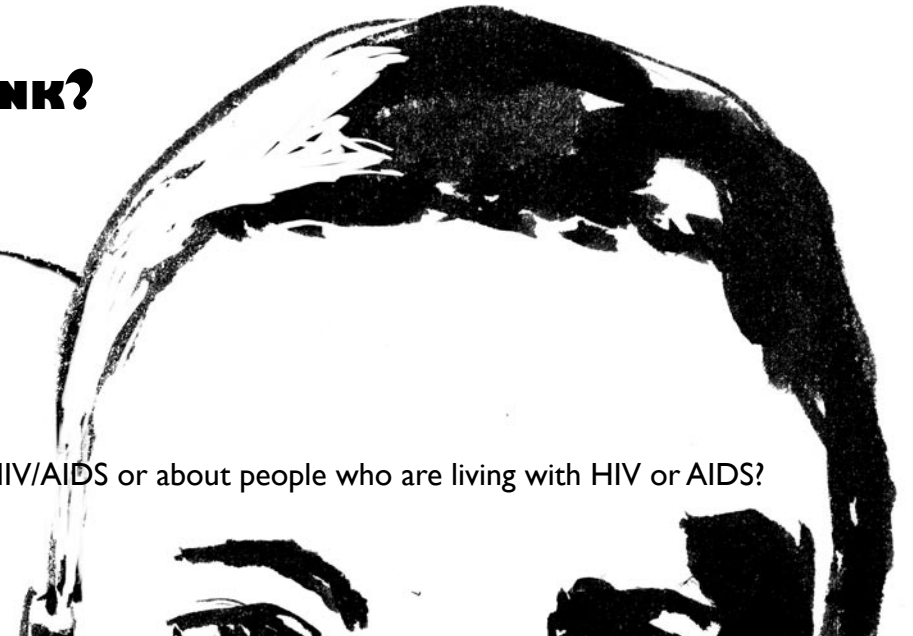
What AIDS is?

How HIV is spread?

How HIV is diagnosed?

How HIV / AIDS is treated?

What beliefs do you have about HIV/AIDS or about people who are living with HIV or AIDS?



Many people do not know much about HIV/AIDS. They may be confused about how the disease is spread and fear the worst. They think they can catch HIV by just being around somebody who is living with HIV or by drinking from a cup that an HIV-positive person has used. Some people think that you can only get HIV if you have sex with many people. This is untrue. It is important to have the correct information about HIV/AIDS.

## What is HIV and AIDS?

HIV stands for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus:

👤 Human: That's us!

👤 Immunodeficiency: When your immune system becomes deficient, it is weakened and cannot fight infections that enter the body.

👤 Virus: A germ that causes diseases.

👤 HIV is a germ or virus that attacks the immune system, making it weak and unable to fight diseases and infections. The virus leads to AIDS.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

👤 Acquired: You get HIV from somebody else.  
It doesn't just develop by itself in your body like cancer.

👤 Immune: HIV attacks the immune system in the body – the very system that fights infection.

👤 Deficiency: As a result of the attack on the immune system, it is weakened and cannot fight infections and diseases.

👤 Syndrome: A collection of different infections or diseases that you pick up because your immune system is too weak to fight them.

## What causes AIDS?

The body is like a complicated machine that is made up of different parts that all work together. One of the most important parts is the immune system. It is like the body's army and protects the body from illnesses. If you cut yourself, and dirt and germs enter the wound, the immune system sends antibodies (troops) to the area to fight the germs and prevent them from infecting the rest of the body.

HIV attacks the immune system and weakens it so that it does not work well. The body now loses its power to defend itself against other germs that cause infections, like pneumonia, thrush, diarrhoea, and tuberculosis (TB). As the body gets weaker, the HIV virus gets stronger and stronger. Eventually, this leads to a total collapse of the immune system which leaves the person open to contracting all kinds of different AIDS-related diseases.

## How does HIV get into the body?

HIV lives in bodily fluids, like blood, semen, vaginal fluids, pus, and mucus. The virus is passed when there is an exchange of body fluids between a person who is infected with HIV and another person.

## HIV CAN be transmitted to a person through:

- ⚠ Unprotected sexual intercourse, e.g., where condoms or some other protection is not used.
- ⚠ Exposure to HIV positive bodily fluids such as through a needle prick.
- ⚠ Sharing a razor or knife, whether it is for shaving or cutting in traditional ceremonies.
- ⚠ Sharing needles with others, e.g., in drug usage.
- ⚠ Coming into contact with blood that is infected with HIV (e.g., through a cut in the skin).  
Use gloves if you need to clean up blood spills or come into any contact with blood.
- ⚠ Deep kissing on the mouth if you have cuts, broken skin, lip sores, or mouth ulcers.
- ⚠ A mother who is infected with HIV can pass it to her baby during pregnancy and birth, as well as during breast feeding.

Bodily fluids CANNOT be transmitted to a person in these ways:

- ⌘ Holding hands, hugging, kissing on the lips (unless you both have open lip sores).
- ⌘ Sharing cups, plates, spoons and glasses.
- ⌘ Sharing food, clothes, beds, chairs, blankets, and towels.
- ⌘ Sharing telephones, transport, toilet seats, desks, and other office equipment.
- ⌘ Sneezing, coughing, spitting, vomit, or faeces (unless there is blood involved).
- ⌘ Masturbating or touching each other.
- ⌘ Insects.
- ⌘ Tears or sweat.
- ⌘ Swimming pools or play gyms.

Women are more likely to get HIV than men.

There are many reasons for this:

- ⌘ Some women are too scared to say no to unsafe sex.
- ⌘ Many men have unprotected sex with a lot of different women which puts all these women, as well as themselves, at risk.
- ⌘ Women who are raped by someone who is HIV positive are at risk.
- ⌘ Some women can only earn a living through prostitution and many of their customers refuse to wear condoms.



## ACTIVITY 1

- ⊕ Below are sentences about HIV/AIDS. Put a tick (✓) next to the sentences that are correct and a cross (X) next to those that are incorrect.

How can someone get HIV/AIDS?	✓ or X
You can get HIV/AIDS by holding hands and hugging.	
You can get HIV/AIDS through unprotected sex.	
You can get HIV/AIDS by sharing needles or blades.	
You can get HIV/AIDS from sharing a telephone, a taxi, clothes or blankets.	
Babies can get HIV/AIDS from breast milk if their mother is HIV positive.	
You can get HIV/AIDS from a toilet seat.	
HIV/AIDS is transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk.	
You can get HIV/AIDS from masturbating.	
Sharing needles is high-risk behaviour and you could get HIV/AIDS from the blood that remains on the needle.	
Mosquitoes, fleas, bedbugs and other insects transmit HIV/AIDS.	
You can get HIV/AIDS if you come into contact with contaminated blood.	
You can get HIV/AIDS through the air.	



## How is HIV/AIDS diagnosed\*?

A person can look and feel fine for many years without even knowing that they have been infected with HIV. The only way to know if you are HIV positive is to have an HIV test.

Before the test, a healthcare worker should spend time explaining how the test works. This is called pre-test counselling. Then a small sample of blood is taken and sent away to be tested for HIV. Once the results come back, the healthcare worker should spend time explaining the results of the test. This is called post-test counselling.

## How is HIV/AIDS treated?

At the moment there is no cure for HIV/AIDS, but doctors and scientists around the world are trying to find one. There are drugs to help stop HIV from growing in the body and to give the body a chance to build up resistance to the disease. These are called anti-retrovirals, or ARVs. They are very expensive, but they can help people with HIV/AIDS feel better. They can also prevent HIV being passed from a mother to her child.

## How to stay healthy even if you are positive.

If you are HIV positive, it is important to live in a healthy way so that you can stay well for as long as possible. Here are some suggestions:

- ⌘ Eat lots of healthy food to keep strong and to stop losing weight.
- ⌘ Exercise gently for about ½ hour, three to four times a week.
- ⌘ Rest and sleep as much as possible.
- ⌘ Go for regular health check ups and visit the doctor or clinic as soon as you feel sick.
- ⌘ Stop smoking, drinking and taking drugs as these can weaken your immune system.
- ⌘ Find somebody to trust who you can tell that you are HIV positive.
- ⌘ HIV/AIDS is a part of all our lives. We all need to know about the disease and how to live positively with the disease. You can help other people by talking openly about HIV/AIDS and by breaking the silence that surrounds the disease.

\*Diagnose: To find out by a test that you have a particular disease.



