

Dear Charity

An HIV positive result does not have to be a death sentence. There are many ways to prevent yourself from getting sick. Firstly, you need to look after yourself well – eat natural and unprocessed food (it isn't expensive!), get enough sleep and exercise, avoid things like sugar and alcohol, treat opportunistic infections (any sickness or infection) quickly and use condoms every time you have sex. An important way to protect your health is to stay hopeful and determined to have a good life.

Try to find an HIV counsellor and support group to encourage you – ask your test centre or any HIV or community health organisation. They can also help you talk to your aunt if you decide to tell her.

Many people are afraid of AIDS. They are afraid of dying, being alone, losing friends and being treated badly. Meeting other HIV positive people helps overcome these fears. Many people have had HIV for years and are healthy and successful; many have sexual relationships and some choose to have children. With advice and guidance, you can do this too. Other people can give you hope and their stories will make you strong. And you can help others, too.

Auntie Stella

ACTION POINTS

- Talk to people who are open about having HIV or AIDS. Ask them to tell you everything that helps them to live healthy, positive and hopeful lives. Everybody needs this information – work with organisations and youth centres to tell more young people.
- Do some ‘attitude research’. For one week, listen to what people say about people with HIV and AIDS. Give information and argue politely with any negative ideas. Report back and say what you learned.
- Think about a time when you felt unhappy and alone AND managed to do something about it. What helped you? Tell the group. Then discuss which of your ideas would help people with HIV or AIDS.
- Look at cards 19, 22 and 40 for other questions from people living with HIV.