WHERE CAN I AVAL OF VCT?

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The truth about AIDS
Pass it on...

PREVENTIVE MEASURES
(Know your ABC)

ABSTINENCE
Abstain from sexual intercourse or, if not, practice safe sex.

BE FAITHFUL
Have a monogamous relationship with an uninfected person.

CONDOM
Use condom and other protective barriers correctly and consistently.

DON’T USE/SHARE
Do not share or use contaminated or unsterile needles or skin-piercing instruments.

EDUCATION
Education and awareness are important measures in preventing HIV/AIDS. Know your ABC. This is the best way to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.
HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS. It attacks the immune system—the body’s defense against disease. HIV is found in blood, breast milk, semen and vaginal fluids.

HIV is a virus that attacks the body and makes it weak. When the body is weak, it is easier to get coughs, diarrhea, fever and other health problems. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is the name given to a group of illnesses in HIV-positive people. These illnesses arise when people living with HIV are no longer able to fight the infection because of weaker immune system.

**WHAT ARE HIV AND AIDS?**

**HOW IS HIV TRANSMITTED?**

1. **Unprotected Sexual Contact**
   - HIV can be transmitted sexually through vaginal sex, oral sex and anal sex.
   - HIV can be transmitted during unprotected sexual intercourse or through contact with infected blood, semen, or cervical or vaginal fluids of the infected person.
   - The presence of other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) increases the chance of contracting or transmitting HIV.

2. **Blood Transmission**
   - HIV-infected blood enters the body through:
     - A transfusion
     - Sharing of contaminated needles, syringes, razors or other sharp objects.
     - Infected blood entering the body through open wounds

3. **Mother-to-Child Transmission**
   - Mothers can pass HIV to their babies during pregnancy, during delivery, or after birth through breastfeeding.

**HOW IS HIV NOT TRANSMITTED?**

- Hugging
- Kissing
- Shaking hands
- Breathing the same air, coughs, sneezes
- Sweat, contact through sport
- Tears, consoling someone who is crying
- Toilet seats
- Food utensils or drinking cups
- Clothes
- Public baths or swimming pools
- Mosquito bites
- Bed bugs
- Any other biting insect or animal

"Those who are engaged in activities which put them at risk of acquiring HIV should defer from donating blood. On the other hand, persons who stay healthy and practice healthy lifestyle are good candidates for blood donors. Their regular blood donations help maintain a stock of safe blood."

**IS THERE A TREATMENT FOR HIV AND AIDS?**

No, there is no cure for HIV and AIDS. Progression of the disease can be slowed down but cannot be stopped completely. The right combination of antiretroviral drugs can slow down the damage that HIV causes to the immune system and delay the onset of AIDS.

**WHAT SORT OF CARE AND TREATMENT ARE AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH HIV?**

Treatment and care for people living with HIV consist of a number of different elements, including Voluntary Counseling and Testing, support for the prevention of onward transmission of HIV, follow-up counseling, advice on food and nutrition, treatment of STIs, management of nutritional effects, prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections, and the provision of antiretroviral drugs.

**WHAT IS VOLUNTARY COUNSELING AND TESTING (VCT)?**

- Voluntary Counseling and Testing is a supportive process between client and counselor, who is often a health care provider.
- A person is counseled before undergoing the test.
  - Determine the patient’s HIV knowledge and correct any mistaken beliefs on HIV and AIDS;
  - Assess the person’s risk by discussing past behaviors;
  - Explain the test and the meaning of test results, including how the results will be given (results should always be given in person), and;
  - Get the patient’s consent or permission to conduct the HIV test.
- After the test, the individual may know his/her HIV status which can motivate people to protect themselves from infection if their test turns out negative and to prevent transmitting HIV to others if their test turns out positive.