



Eliane

Facts about HIV and sexuality

- HIV is a virus. It can only survive in the human body.
- People can unknowingly be living with HIV for years without feeling sick.
- When untreated, HIV is found in blood, sperm, vaginal fluid and breast milk.
- Unprotected sex is worldwide the main cause of HIV transmission, equally affecting men and women.
- Condoms, PrEP and HIV medication provide effective protection against HIV transmission through sex. Only condoms protect against other sexually transmittable infections.

Sexual education

Sex is part of a healthy adult life. As for any other aspect of a healthy life style, children have to be educated about healthy choices.

Being open about my HIV status was the greatest thing to do for my own freedom. But being a mother of three, I also have to educate my children. They too could face prejudice, HIV stigma and discrimination.

I told them my story in a child-friendly way, by portraying HIV as a small dragon in my blood. I take medication every day to keep the dragon asleep. As long as he is sleeping, the dragon is totally harmless. I took medication to prevent the dragon from coming to their blood when I was carrying my sons under my heart. I reassured them that my dragon can never pass on to them. I can hug my children and take care of them, without any risk. HIV cannot be passed on by sharing the bathroom or using the same cup.

Some months later, we were talking on how children are conceived. I strongly believe they need to learn from an early age how to love and respect their body and make responsible choices. My role is to guide them while they develop into teenagers and adults. They need to know that sexuality is natural and beautiful. And I do not want to become a grandmother too soon either! As parents we work on building trust with them. I believe, that by educating them, my children will know what to do when it comes to love. As a mother I will always support them.

This is something I never learned from my own parents. I found out the hard way! I do not want my kids to go through the same. The most important value I teach them is to love and respect every other person as much as they respect themselves. Everybody deserves to be loved and respected, no matter their sexual orientation, background or gender. Educating my children for a happy and healthy sex life as adults also means I want them to learn how to protect themselves from getting a sexually transmittable disease, including HIV. They will protect themselves and their future partners. And I hope they will also talk to their friends about it.

I prefer to talk with them now in trust and in the safety of our own home. They are growing older and they may go to Internet and search out of curiosity. I have no control whatsoever on the information they find themselves. I make the choice to be their Internet when it comes to sexual education.

Hiv Vereniging

The Dutch Association of People Living with HIV (Hiv Vereniging) represents the interests of all people with HIV in the Netherlands, irrespective of background. We provide information about living with HIV and organise all kinds of meet-ups.

Servicepunt

Our team of expert volunteers can be contacted for any question about living with HIV, by telephone on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 14:00 – 22:00 hrs, or by email: servicepunt@hivvereniging.nl.

See www.hivvereniging.nl