



Lucy

Facts about HIV

- People living with HIV can conceive naturally when the virus is suppressed with HIV medication. There is zero risk of HIV transmission to the HIV negative partner.
- In an uncomplicated pregnancy there is no risk of HIV transmission inside the womb, when the virus is suppressed.
- Children can be born safely with natural delivery, when the right precautions are taken.
- Babies born by HIV positive mothers are treated with oral HIV medication for four weeks after birth.

“Maaaaaaaam”

This is the joy of my daughter running to the door when I come back home every single time. Making me smile with her hugs as she proceeds to ask what I have brought her. Then she sits on my lap and we tell each other how our days were, with kisses and more smiles and laughs too.

He sits on my side of the bed if he leaves earlier than me in the morning and plants a kiss on me. Rubs my baby hairs as he says bye. Or how he takes me to the bus stop if he's staying behind that day just because. I love these moments with him. It has been five years now and I could not have asked for a better partner and best friend to go through life with, together with my daughter.

I was always scared of families growing up. I used to wonder if that is all there is to a woman, finish high school, get married, have kids, take care of the home, the family, wait for orders from the man, go through violence from someone who claims to love you and do a simple job or business near home, then die. Damn! I preferred being a Nun or just travel the world learning about new religions, languages and cultures than such an empty life.

When I got diagnosed, this became even more real of an idea. I mean how were I ever going to start a family? Those who rejected me made this dream a lot easier and I would leave those who seemed too serious. And then he came, my partner, everything went by fast but it took time before I could say I love him. It took time before I could declare him my partner and in it all he was patient.

Young women living with or affected by HIV who are my friends say I am the lucky one. I do not know about luck, I just think I met a man who was ready to make it work and nothing, not even my HIV status, could come in the way of this.

Not my own insecurities or my own fears. Going through prevention of mother to child transmission was not easy for me, neither was the pregnancy or fear of infecting my partner. Before we knew of U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable, meaning you cannot pass on the virus when the virus is suppressed by medication) I was in constant fear. I would not be able to go to the facility for any of her results without him, I would rather reschedule if he was not available.

These are the realities most people never talk about, how my friends get scared when pregnant, when there are stock outs of ARVs or prophylaxis for their children, when their partners get a cold and have to worry they have something to do with it. The biggest of monsters though is disclosure. HIV has been one of the most moralised condition and letting your partner know is a process that is most painful. I had already gone public so I just asked him to Google me. This made it easier to discuss it rather than to start the conversation myself. He is HIV negative and so is my daughter, I do not know if this family will get bigger than this but who knows. Even having my little beautiful family is a miracle.

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