



Eat better and live longer

We eat for many reasons. Food gives us the energy and nutrients our bodies need to:

- stay alive, move around and work
- build, maintain and repair new body cells and tissue
- resist and fight infections

What are eating habits?

When the body does not get enough food, it becomes weak. It cannot grow and work the way it should. Healthy and balanced eating habits means eating enough of the right foods to keep us healthy and fit.

HIV/Aids and eating habits

The HIV virus attacks the body's protection system, called the immune system. When a person is in the early stages of the virus, he/she does not look or feel sick. Later on, there will be more signs of HIV/Aids. This includes:

- weight loss
- fever
- diarrhoea
- other infections, such as a sore throat and tuberculosis.

Why are good eating habits important?

Good eating habits are very important for people with HIV/Aids. If a person learns how to eat the right food early on in their illness, they can plant, store and cook the right foods.

Good eating habits are also important, because the person with HIV/Aids can stay healthy for longer. Because the virus lowers the person's protection system (immune system), they can get other infections, such as fever and diarrhoea. When a person has one these illnesses, he/she will eat less because:

- he/she does not have an appetite
- the body cannot take in enough of the right nutrients.

Because of this, the person becomes malnourished, thin and weak.

One of the ways one can see that the virus is starting to make someone sick, is when a grown-up person loses a lot of weight (6-7kg). When a person is already too thin, it can be very dangerous. People with HIV/Aids must:

- eat the right amounts of the right foods
- treat infections early
- start eating enough after they were sick.

A person may get treatment for tuberculosis, pneumonia or throat infections (called opportunistic infections) and HIV at the same time. These medicines may change the person's eating habits. If you eat the right food, it can help the medicine work better.

What foods are healthy?

- Eat bread, pap, cereals, rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, samp, mealies and pasta with every meal
- Eat fruit and vegetables every day. They supply vitamins that make the immune system strong. Eat spinach, morogo, pumpkin leaves, pumpkin, carrots, mangoes, oranges, tomatoes, potatoes and maroelas
- Eat a portion of meat every day. It can be beef, mutton, chicken or pork
- Eat or drink maas, sour milk, yoghurt or milk every day. Drink only pasteurised milk
- Eat dried beans, peas, lentils, peanuts or soya regularly
- Sugars, fats and oils provide energy. Add sugar, butter, margarine and cooking oils to your food
- Do not eat too much salt.

Healthy and balanced eating habits are important for people living with HIV/Aids, because it helps them:

- stay healthy
- feel good about themselves
- stay positive about life. **UM**