



# Africa

**MYTH:** It's cool to take drugs. You can't get HIV/AIDS by using drugs.

**FACT:** No! Drugs affect your ability to make good choices. They may cause you to make careless decisions like not using condoms during sex or injecting drugs with contaminated needles.

**MYTH:** Having sex with multiple sex partners or a virgin will cure HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

**FACT:** No! Having sex with multiple partners or a virgin will put them at risk of infection too. If you continue having sex while infected with HIV or an STI, use a condom. Using drugs while infected could quickly spread HIV or STIs through careless decisions to have unprotected sex or share contaminated needles.

**MYTH:** HIV/AIDS is only a homosexual (gay) disease.

**FACT:** No! HIV/AIDS does not discriminate among people. In Africa the most common way HIV is passed is from man to woman or woman to man through sexual contact.

**MYTH:** There is a cure for HIV/AIDS.

**FACT:** No! There is no cure for HIV/AIDS. In some areas of the world medication is available to help infected people live healthier lives, but medication is costly and requires constant medical care. Using a condom and not doing drugs are ways to prevent being infected with HIV in the first place.

**MYTH:** I can become infected with HIV from sitting next to or near someone who has the disease.

**FACT:** No! You cannot become infected with HIV by sitting next to an infected person. You also cannot get HIV by using the same eating utensils, sharing the same toilet or touching an infected person. HIV is spread only through:

1. Blood-to-blood contact with needles or through blood transfusions
2. Sexual contact
3. HIV positive mothers to their unborn child, through childbirth or drinking infected breast milk

**MYTH:** It is impossible to get HIV from obese women, married women or schoolgirls.

**FACT:** No! It is possible for anyone to be infected regardless of size, marital status, age, religion, colour or wealth. Know your partner before having sex. Protect you and your partner by using condoms, by not sharing needles and by not making careless decisions under the influence of drugs.

**Stop the Myths**