

My Health
My Family's Future

Developed by



Cambodian People Living
with HIV/AIDS Network



HIV/AIDS Coordinating
Committee

Statement from the star of the booklet

When I was diagnosed with HIV, I didn't know what to do. I heard of a medicine called ARV but didn't know much about it. I only knew that ARVs could prolong the lives of PLWHAs. Because I wanted to live long, I wished to take ARVs. My HIV Support Group educated me about ARVs and encouraged me to learn more from ARV medical doctors. I learned that there are many steps I needed to do before starting to take ARVs and that when I take ARVs I must follow the advice of my medical doctor very closely. I want to share my experiences about taking ARVs because I want other PLWHAs who do not know about ARVs to have an opportunity to live longer like me. Now my dream has come true!

Acknowledgement

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**I am HIV+
What is HIV/AIDS?**



What can I do?



What are ARVs?

**When can I take
ARVs?**



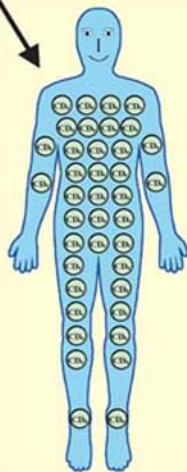
**How do I take
ARVs?**

**Should I stop
taking the
medication?**

What is HIV?

- ❖ HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system of your body.
- ❖ Your immune system has cells called CD4 cells.

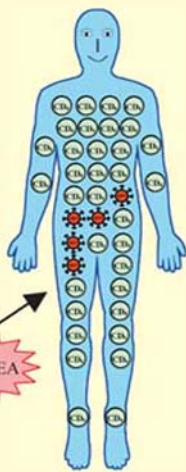
The HIV



CD4 = 1200



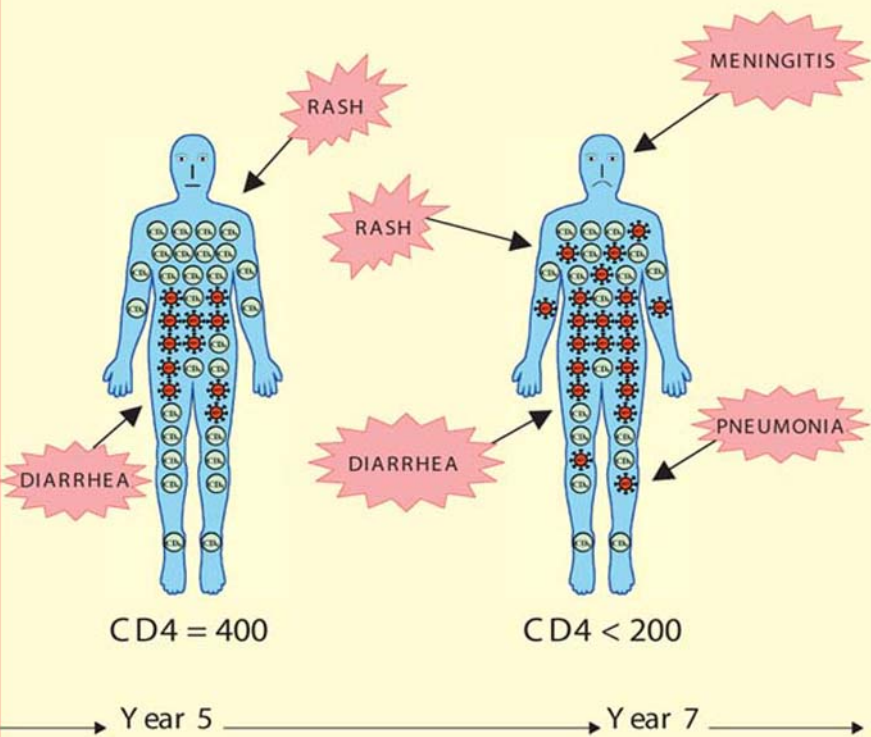
CD4 = 900



CD4 = 600

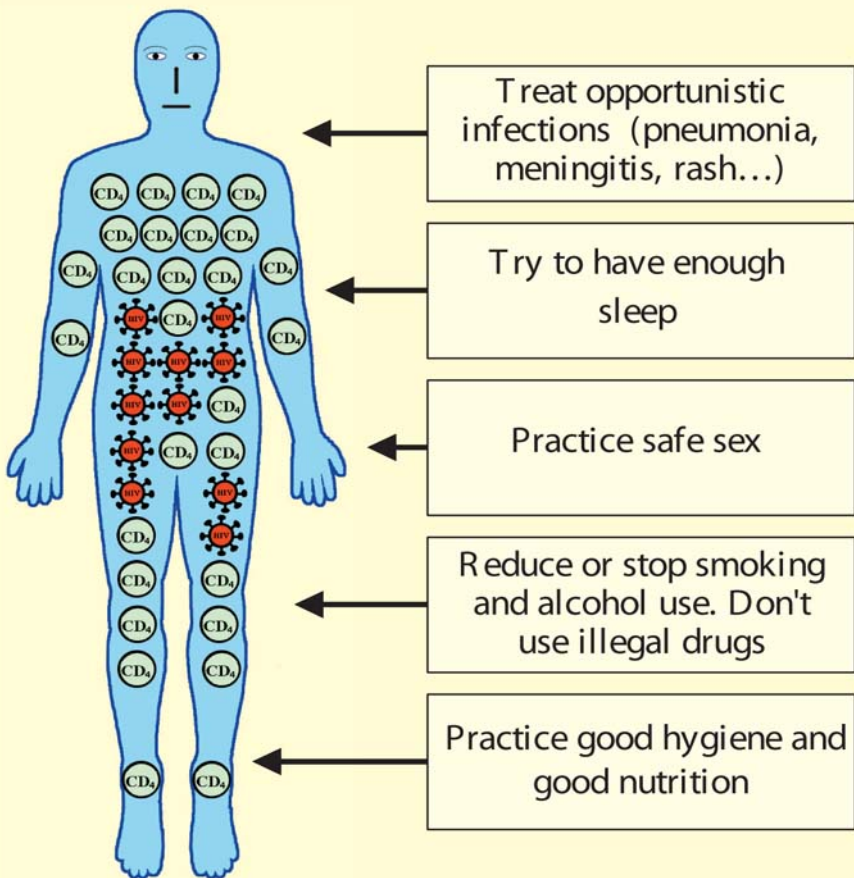
Year 1 _____ Year 3

- ❖ These CD4 cells act like soldiers and fight off any diseases that enter your body.
- ❖ HIV kills the CD4 cells. Without enough CD4 cells, your immune system will weaken and cannot fight against disease.



I am HIV+and What can I do?

- You can stay healthy longer by taking care of yourself. This includes:



☞ And, if you get sick and your CD4 is below 200, this is the time to start taking ARVs.

What are ARVs?

- ARVs can help PLWHAs prolong life. ARVs are drugs that are usually taken as tablets.

What can ARVs do?

ARVs can:

- Stop an increase of the amount of HIV in your body.
- Reduce opportunistic infections.
- Improve general health.
- Help PLWHAs to prolong their lives.

- **BUT ARVs CANNOT CURE HIV.**

Once you start taking ARVs you must take them for the rest of your life. Therefore you have to make a commitment.

When can I take ARVs?

- Before you decide to take ARVs, you must see an ARV specialist doctor.



- The doctor will examine you and measure the number of CD4 cells in your blood.
- If you are showing signs of illness and your CD4 count is below 200, then you can start taking ARVs.
- If you are not showing signs of illness, you probably do not need ARVs.

What are side effects?

- Side effects are unwanted effects on your body caused by the drugs. The most common side effects caused by ARVs are nausea, vomiting, and others. Your doctor can explain to you about the side effects.

Should I stop taking the medication?

☹ No!

- ☞ You should not make this decision by yourself - you must visit your ARV doctor.



- Your doctor will give you the best advice on this decision.

Why shouldn't I stop taking the drugs?

- A problem with ARVs is that if you don't take it regularly as told by your ARV doctor, the medicine can become weak and the treatment fails. This is because the HIV becomes familiar with the drugs and can fight against the drugs. This is called **drug resistance**.



- Drug resistance is more likely to happen if you forget to take your tablets.

It is important that you follow your drug program.

Adherence:

- ☞ Take the correct dose at the correct time.
- ☞ Never miss a dose.



- ☞ It is your choice and decision to take ARVs, so make sure you understand why and how you take ARVs.

Remember

- ☞ ARVs cannot cure HIV, but if you take them they can prolong your life.
- ☞ Taking ARVs is a serious decision. Make sure you talk to medical professionals who work with an ARV program before you make your decision about taking ARVs.
- ☞ If you have sex, always practice safe sex.
- ☞ Once you start taking ARVs, you must take them for the rest of your life. It is dangerous to your health to take ARVs for short periods.
- ☞ Be cautious of bad practitioners who are not experienced with ARVs and may want to sell you ARVs at high prices.
- ☞ Contact ARV programs for information on the real cost of ARVs. Pharmacies don't always tell the real price.

Where can I find information on ARVs?

Drug programs that offer information and counseling on ARVs include:

- **Russian Hospital**

Address: Yothapol Khemarak Phomin (St. 63),
Phnom Penh

Phone Number: (855) 23 880 647,
(855) 23 215 764

- **Center of Hope**

Address: St. 134, Phnom Penh

Phone Number: (855) 23 882 484

- **Calmette and MDM**

Address: N° 3, Monivong, Phnom Penh

Phone Number: (855) 23 427 792,
(855) 12 814 453

- **MSF / HB (Siem Reap)**

Address: Provincial Hospital, Siem Reap

Phone Number: 012 737 812

- **MSF / HB (Takeo)**

Address: Provincial Hospital, Takeo

Phone Number: 012 834 638

- **MSF / F (Kompong Cham)**

Address: Provincial Hospital, Kompong Cham

Phone Number: 012 524 730,
012 767 720

Process in taking ARVs



1. Registration



2. Get advice from doctor



3. Take blood



4. Meet social worker



5. Receive ARVs



6. Take medicine regularly



7. Meet doctor



8. Control side effects



9. Work as usual



10. Take medicine regularly



Technical and financial support by



For more information contact:

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- Pact Cambodia
Hong Kong Center, ground floor 108-112,
Preah Sothearos Blvd., Phnom Penh
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