KNOWING YOUR HIV STATUS

Two people are sitting at a table, discussing and looking at booklets about male circumcision (MC) for HIV prevention.
1. **KNOWING YOUR HIV STATUS**

“Can you tell me a little bit about why you came here today?”

- All clients, MC or non-MC, are offered an HIV test.

- Knowing your HIV status before MC assists in maximizing the health benefits that MC provides.

- **Non-MC client:** Knowing your HIV status empowers you to take steps to reduce HIV risks and live a healthy life regardless of the outcome of the test results.

- Establish willingness of client to take the test and obtain written consent.

- MC clients who decline the test must be respected for their decision and referred to an MC provider.
TESTING AND THE WINDOW PERIOD

- HIV negative and healthy
- HIV enters body
- WINDOW PERIOD
  - HIV multiplies
  - Highly infectious
  - May test negative
- Immune system responds,
  less infectious
- HIV becomes AIDS,
  Immune system weakens,
  more infectious

= Antibodies
= HIV
TESTING, THE WINDOW PERIOD AND ACUTE HIV INFECTION

“Tell me what you know about the HIV test.”

Explain HIV antibody test, window period and acute HIV infection.

- An HIV test detects the antibodies (soldiers) to HIV, not the virus itself.

- Although these tests are very sensitive, there is a “window period”. This is the period when one who is infected with HIV does not have enough antibodies to be detected by the tests we are using.

- During the first 6 to 8 weeks of infection, the virus quickly multiplies. During this time the person is highly infectious and can easily spread the HIV infection to others.

- After reading the test results, we will spend some time together to discuss ways to reduce HIV risks.
HIV TEST RESULTS

Reduce Partners
Abstinence
Condoms
MC
TEST RESULTS ▶ RISK ASSESSMENT ▶ RISK REDUCTION

“What do these results mean to you?”

Understanding the results:
- Review window period.
- Establish client's own situation. If in window period, ask client to re-test after 8 weeks.
- Ask client what puts him/her at risk of HIV infection.
- Help client with risk reduction plan, which could include MC, using condoms, reducing number of partners, abstinence and reducing alcohol use.
- Condom demonstration.
- Encourage client to discuss results with partner and to come back for couples counselling.

If client is positive:
- Explain positive living strategies and refer to post-test programme.
- Explain how HIV can delay healing and that MC will not protect client from HIV. If client insists on MC, refer to an MC provider.
- Refer client for additional and appropriate services: CD4 count, ARVs, PMTCT, STIs, further counselling.
"What do you know about MC?"

**Benefits and Risks**

MC offers some protection, but not 100%, from:

- HIV;
- STIs such as chancroid, syphilis;
- cancer of the penis;
- urinary tract infections in infants; and
- cervical cancer for women whose partners are circumcised.

The risks of MC include:

- pain,
- bleeding,
- swelling,
- reaction to medicine, and
- infection.
HOW CAN MC HELP PREVENT HIV?

- The foreskin tears easily.
- The foreskin has many HIV target cells.

Uncircumcised

- Outer Foreskin
- Inner Foreskin

Uncircumcised erect

- EASIER FOR HIV TO ENTER
- DIFFICULT FOR HIV TO ENTER

Circumcised
"Let me explain in detail how MC can help prevent HIV and other STIs."

- The inside of the foreskin is soft and moist and is more likely to get a tiny tear or sore that allows HIV to enter the body more easily.

- The foreskin contains many “target cells” that allow HIV to enter the body easily.

- After MC, the skin on the head of penis becomes thicker and is less likely to tear.

- Even after MC, HIV can still enter through open skin or through the urethra.
HIV PREVENTION

“Can you tell me the different ways of preventing HIV?”

- Review HIV prevention methods.
- “Being faithful” is mutual fidelity among two negative partners who know their HIV status.
- MC is not a substitute for other prevention methods.
- It is still possible to get HIV after MC.
- Alcohol and drugs affect our self-control, making it easier for people to influence us to do things that we don’t want to do. Drinking can lead to risky behaviour, including having unprotected sex.
The MC Procedure

"I’d like to discuss the MC procedure in more detail."

- Assessment
- Informed consent
- Most MCs take less than one hour
- Clinic’s dedication to cleanliness and infection prevention
- Injection of anaesthetic for pain prevention
- Removal of the foreskin
- Suturing and control of bleeding
- Dressing
- Post-MC pain relief
- Post-MC counselling
- Disposal of foreskin
RECOVERY: THE FIRST 7 DAYS

“I’d like to tell you more about the recovery process.”

- After MC, it is important to rest and keep the penis clean and dry.
- MC clients come back after 2 days to have the bandage removed.
- They come back again after 7 days for a review and more counselling.
- Clients can call or come back at any time if they have a problem.
- Complete recovery takes 6 weeks.
- MC clients should not have sex or masturbate for 6 weeks. The penis must completely heal before sex.
- Having sex too early is risky for the client and his partner.
MC DOES NOT PROVIDE 100% PROTECTION
RETURNING TO SEXUAL ACTIVITY

“I would like us to talk about returning to sexual activity after MC.”

- Engaging in sex too early can delay recovery and put you and your partner at risk.

- MC does not provide 100% protection. After MC you should still protect yourself and your partner by using a condom. Other prevention methods include abstaining from sex and being faithful to a partner who is faithful and HIV negative.

- Sexual pleasure is individual and depends on many things. Research shows that MC does not change one’s sexual satisfaction.
MEN’S HEALTH

Reducing Partners

HIV?!

Family Planning
MEN’S HEALTH

“What questions do you have about any of the issues we discussed?”

Clients may have questions on any topic, including:

- HIV/AIDS
- ABCs of safer sex
- Family Planning
- VCT

Clients may benefit from referral on these topics:

- Sexually transmitted infections
- Substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, tobacco)
- Violence (including gender-based violence)
- Goal setting and decision-making (including the role of women and equal partners)
- Sexuality and gender issues
- Physical and psychological changes that occur during adolescence
- Male and female reproductive health