

HIV: Children 8 to 10 Years Old

Here are some common questions from parents and caregivers of children who have HIV.

What does my child need to know about HIV?

- This is a good age range for telling your child all about HIV and using the words “HIV” and “AIDS.” Children at this age are more capable of keeping information private. They can understand more detailed information about HIV and AIDS. Read our handout on *HIV Facts*.
- Help your child understand that there are many things about our bodies that are private, such as menstruation and bowel movements. These are topics that we do not talk about with most people. HIV may be this kind of topic. Be clear with your child about who he can talk with about HIV and who he should not talk to at this time.
- Be prepared for questions about HIV/AIDS and living with the disease, such as: How did I get it? How did my mom or dad get it? Am I going to die? Can I have children?
- Children may hear information about HIV that is not correct. If your child feels you are uncomfortable talking about HIV/AIDS, he may go elsewhere to learn more. Keep the lines of communication open so that your child will ask you questions rather than asking others, who may not give correct information.
- Your child may need to know how to answer questions from others. Teach your child about many ways to answer, including the option to not answer, based on the situation.
- Your child may begin to ask questions about sex. Be open and honest. Read our handout on *HIV: Talking to Your Child About Sex*.

How can I keep my child and others safe from germs?

- Teach your child not to touch other people’s blood and not to allow others to touch her blood. Explain to your child: “We don’t touch other people’s blood and we don’t let others touch our blood because there are germs in blood. We don’t want to get germs from others or give them to others.” Read our handout on *HIV: Infection Control*.
- Remind your child to use only her own toothbrush. Sharing toothbrushes passes germs from one person to another.
- Continue to wash your hands often, and remind your child to wash her hands. Washing hands is the best way to keep you and your child from catching common illnesses (like a cold and the flu).
- Remind your child to cough and sneeze into her elbow, not into her hand. Also, remind her not to touch her eyes, nose or mouth with her hands.



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What about medicines?

- Your child's doctor may give medicines to help keep your child well.
- Around this age, most children start taking pills instead of liquid medicine. Your doctor or nurse will help your child learn how to swallow pills.
- Be consistent. Give the medicine at the right time of day and in the correct amount.
- Tell your doctor or nurse right away if you are unable to get your child to take his medicines.
- Read our handout on *HIV: Making Medicines Easy*.

What about brothers and sisters?

- Talk about HIV in an open, honest and loving way within your family.
- Keeping information private *within* a family can create distrust and anger.
- As children grow older, they are more able to understand and keep some types of information private, if needed.
- Tell each of your children about HIV when they are ready to listen and understand.
- Be aware that if one child knows more than another, there could be some resentment.
- Creating a warm and loving space for your infected child and his siblings allows them to talk about HIV and work through their feelings about the disease and how it affects them and their family.

How can I help my child do well in school?

- If you feel your child is having difficulties learning at school, talk to your child's teacher. Ask your child's teacher if he thinks your child should be tested.
- Testing can help find your child's strengths and weaknesses. It can also help you find out what changes can be made to help your child learn. Keep in mind that you may request testing even if the teacher feels it is not needed.
- Children infected with HIV qualify for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This means that your child can receive services or accommodations needed to help her succeed in school. If your child needs further help or special placement, you may request that a team evaluation be done by the school in order to implement an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Keep in mind that you do not have to tell the school *what* the medical condition is to receive services.

Anything else I should know?

- Treat your child the same as you would any other child so that he can lead a full and happy life. Give your child with HIV the very same activities, responsibilities and discipline (nurture and guidance) as you would any other child.
- If you, as the parent or caregiver, are going to stay in the hospital, take steps to help your child feel safe and secure while you are away.
- Choose someone to care for your child whom your child knows well and with whom he feels safe.

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- For help with talking to your child about HIV, see our handout on *HIV: Talking to Your Child*.
- If you, your child or someone close to your child is nearing the end stages of life ask your child's doctor or nurse for more information on how to help you and your child cope with death. Read our handout on *HIV: Helping Children Understand the End of Life*.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Your child's health care provider
- Visit these Web sites:
 - www.kidshealth.org
 - www.pedaids.org
 - www.seattlechildrens.org
- Read our handouts on:
 - *HIV: Children 11 to 13 years old*
 - *HIV: Teens*
 - *HIV Facts*
 - *HIV: Making Medicines Easy*
 - *HIV: Infection Control*
 - *HIV: Talking to Your Child*
 - *HIV: Helping Children Understand the End of Life*
 - *HIV: Talking to Your Child About Sex*
 - *HIV: Teens and Sex*

Some of the material in this handout was adapted from the following Web sites:

www.4woman.gov/HIV/children.cfm

www.aids.org

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Disclaimer: The inclusion of any Web site link (or resource accessed through a link) does not imply endorsement by Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center. Seek the advice of your child's health care provider before you act or rely upon any information from these resources.

Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.