

Life force : taking positive action : HIV positive people can help themselves stay healthy / text by Jane Elven ; layout by Amy Adams Ellerman.

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Publication/Creation

[between 1990 and 1995?]

Persistent URL

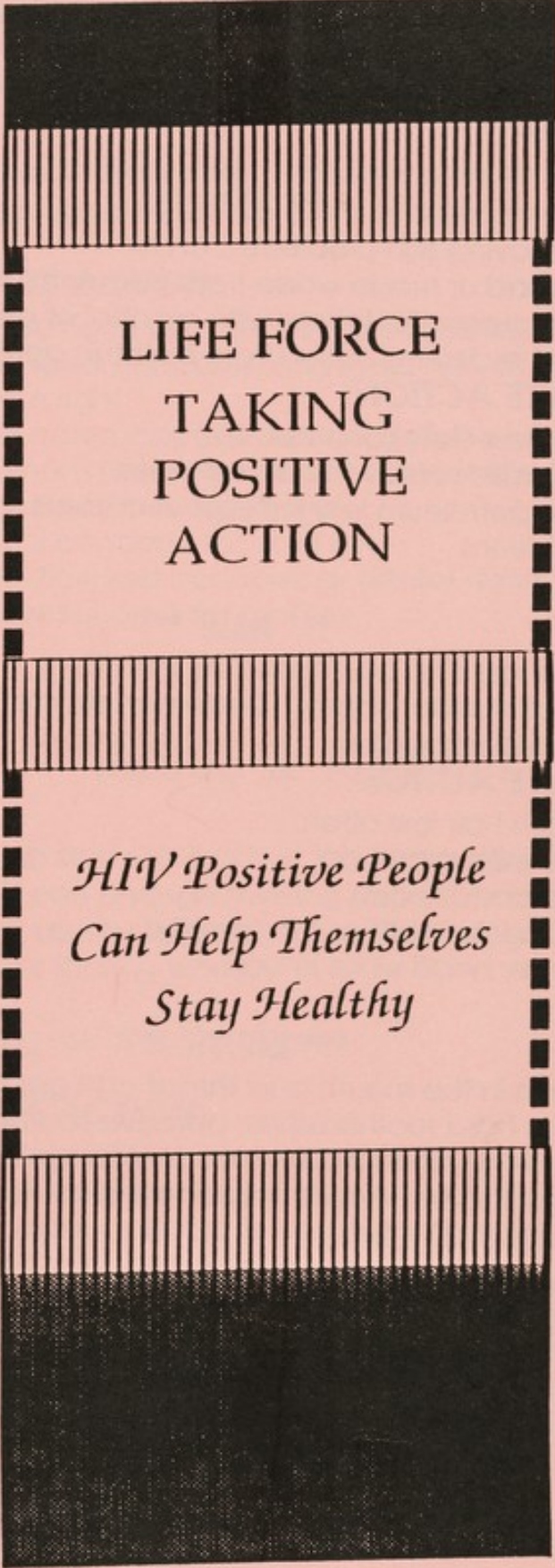
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LIFE FORCE
TAKING
POSITIVE
ACTION

*HIV Positive People
Can Help Themselves
Stay Healthy*

HIV+ people can take action to help themselves stay healthy. Here are some simple things you can do to help keep small problems small, or to avoid some problems entirely.

***** SKIN *****

Annoying skin problems can be spread or made worse from perfumed soaps, skin creams or lotions with alcohol or perfume, and by taking baths (from bathtub germs).

TAKE ACTION:

Shower dally (don't bathe)
Use mild soap without perfumes
Use petroleum jelly instead of creams or lotions

***** HAIR *****

Hair loss can be caused by infections, poor nutrition, drying, perfumed shampoo and brushing hair.

TAKE ACTION:

Wash hair less often
Use mild shampoo
Use conditioner
Use wide tooth comb (gently)
Cover head while in bed

***** MOUTH *****

Sores in the mouth and throat can get worse from hard toothbrushes, abrasive toothpaste, brushing inside the cheeks and tongue, and cleaning the mouth only once or twice a day.

TAKE ACTION:

Use soft toothbrush
Use mild toothpaste or baking soda
Use low alcohol mouth washes
Clean inside cheeks and tongue with cotton swabs
Clean mouth three times a day

*** HANDWASHING ***

Germ on hands and bar soaps can spread infections, but hot water and harsh soap can cause skin problems.

TAKE ACTION:

Use warm water and mild soap from a pump dispenser

Always wash hands after using the bathroom

Always wash hands before eating

Always wash hands before preparing food

Always rinse hands well after washing

Use petroleum jelly to protect skin

Use rubber or latex gloves when housecleaning

*** FOOD ***

Poor nutrition weakens the immune system and can invite infections. Germ on unwashed or unpeeled fruits and vegetables can also cause infections.

TAKE ACTION:

Wash and peel all fresh fruits and vegetables

Eat a variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, grain (whole grain bread, crackers, cereal), chicken, fish, meat, eggs, cheese, milk, yogurt

Eat several small meals instead of three large ones

Cook meats well done (to kill germs)

Keep health snacks handy (nuts, fruits, carrot sticks, yogurt, crackers with cheese or peanut butter)

Fix foods you enjoy — you'll eat more

Eat in relaxed surroundings

Eat with a friend

*** HOUSECLEANING ***

Household germs can cause infections.

Blood spills at home might infect others.

TAKE ACTION:

Mix 1 part bleach to 10 parts water for a cheap, reliable cleaning solution for toilets, tubs, floors, sinks, counter tops

Use plastic or formica cutting boards instead of wood (which holds in germs)
Change filters on air conditioners and heating ducts often
Clean up blood spills with bleach solution
Seal bloody throwaway items (like sanitary napkins) inside two plastic bags before throwing out
Wash blood spills on laundry in bleach solution
Use latex or rubber gloves when cleaning house

*** PETS ***

Changing litter boxes, bird cages, aquariums, or picking up dog BM (bowel movement) can cause serious diseases

TAKE ACTION:

Ask a non HIV infected person to do these chores, or

Always use latex gloves, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards

*** HEALTH CARE ***

Missing doctor appointments can turn small problems into big ones

TAKE ACTION:

Find a doctor you trust,
and see that doctor regularly
CHECK YOUR BODY OFTEN AND SEE YOUR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY IF YOU NOTICE:

- *Skin rashes, lumps or bruises
- *Swollen lymph glands
- *Sores or thrush in the mouth
- *Fever that lasts several days
- *Feeling very tired even though you've had plenty of rest
- *Weight loss
- *Diarrhea (runs)
- *Coughing or feeling short of breath
- *Headache, forgetfulness, dizziness, or eyes feel sensitive to light
- *Unusual bleeding (like bleeding gums)

*** SEX ***

Sexually transmitted diseases, or more HIV virus are dangerous to HIV infected people.

TAKE ACTION:

If you have sex, always have safer sex

Use latex condoms, and learn how to use them right

Use contraceptive foam or gel with non-oxydol 9 (this helps kill the virus) along with condoms for vaginal sex

Use 2 condoms for anal sex

Use flavored condoms or dental dams (latex squares) for oral sex

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Drugs and alcohol hurt the immune system, and can change thinking so people take risks they usually wouldn't take, like having unsafe sex or sharing works:

If you use drugs or alcohol,

TAKE ACTION:

Get into a treatment program or detox

Call Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics

Anonymous (listed in your phone book)

Don't use needle drugs

If you use needle drugs, don't share your works (including needles, syringes, cookers, cottons or water)

If you share, clean needles, syringes and cookers with bleach and rinse with clean water (cotton and water can't be cleaned so never share them)

*** STRESS ***

Stress can hurt the Immune system, and can make people sick.

TAKE ACTION:

Join a support group

Talk with supportive people you trust

Use meditation, visualization and relaxation techniques

Knowledge is power — learn as much as you can about HIV

*** BLAME & GUILT ***

Some people blame themselves for having HIV, but no one wants it or tries to get it.

NO ONE DESERVES HIV, and HIV infection is nobody's fault. Guilt can cause stress and hurt the immune system, so let go of the blame and

TAKE ACTION:

Accept yourself

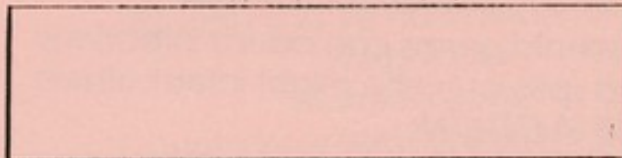
Be gentle with yourself

Do something you enjoy each day

For more information, contact: (718)797-0937

LifeForce: Women Fighting AIDS, Inc.

For local information call:



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