

# Sisters Talk about HIV

## Alma's story

Alma! I don't mean to pry...

but are you saying you and Ramon may have sex?

Does that bother you, Teresa?

Don't you like Ramon?

# Any woman can get HIV.



## **HIV is the virus that causes AIDS, a deadly disease.**

HIV gets passed in blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk.

A woman can get HIV if she:

- ◆ has any kind of sex—vaginal, anal or oral—with a person who has HIV
- ◆ shares needles to shoot drugs, or make tattoos or body piercings.

Even women who are married and don't shoot drugs can get HIV, if their partners have HIV.

You cannot get HIV from mosquito bites, sharing food, using restrooms or hugging.

## **You can't tell who has HIV by how they look.**

People with HIV may:

- ◆ not know they have it
- ◆ deny they have it
- ◆ not look or feel sick.

A simple, safe test is the only way to tell if a person has HIV.

## **Among Hispanic and Latina women ages 25-44, AIDS is a leading cause of death.**

### **Please read:**

Talk to your health-care provider! This booklet is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health-care provider. • The photos in this booklet are of models. The models have no relation to the issues presented.

# Alma's story

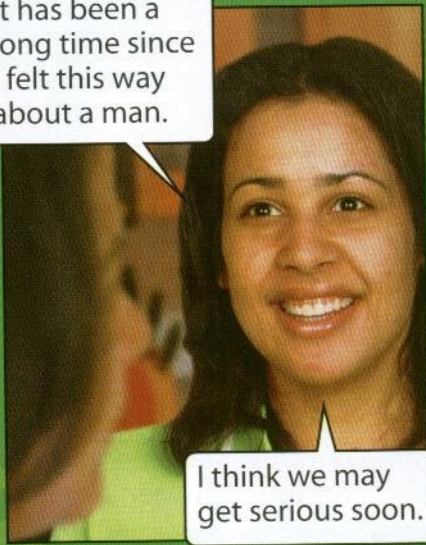
Teresa

Alma

Little sister, how is it going with Ramon?

He is so kind to me—and so handsome!

It has been a long time since I felt this way about a man.

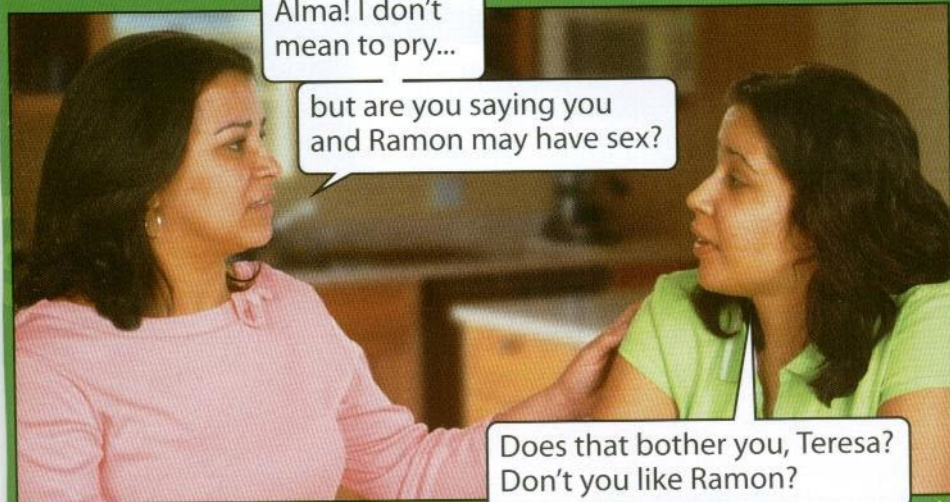


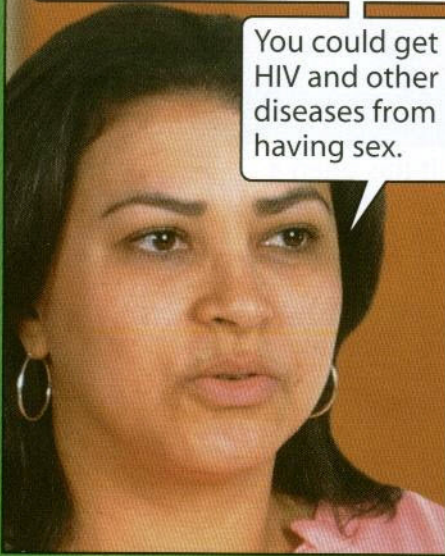
I think we may get serious soon.

Alma! I don't mean to pry...

but are you saying you and Ramon may have sex?

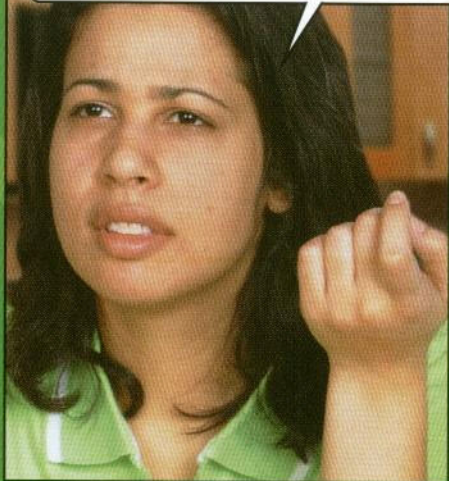
Does that bother you, Teresa? Don't you like Ramon?





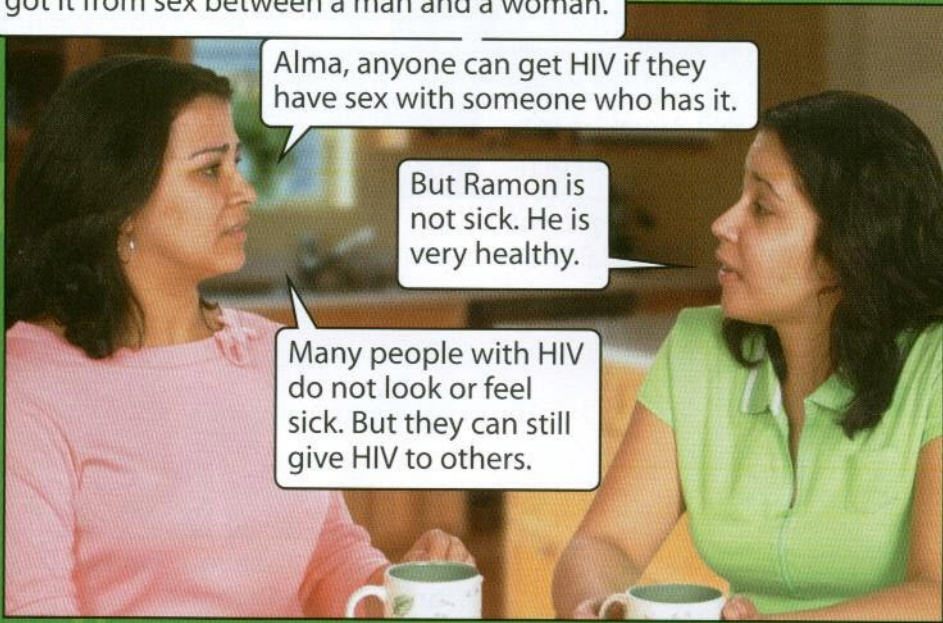
I like him. But having sex is a big step. You must think about your health.

You could get HIV and other diseases from having sex.



Ramon could never pass on HIV to me! People who shoot drugs get HIV. And men who have sex with other men get HIV. Ramon is not like that.

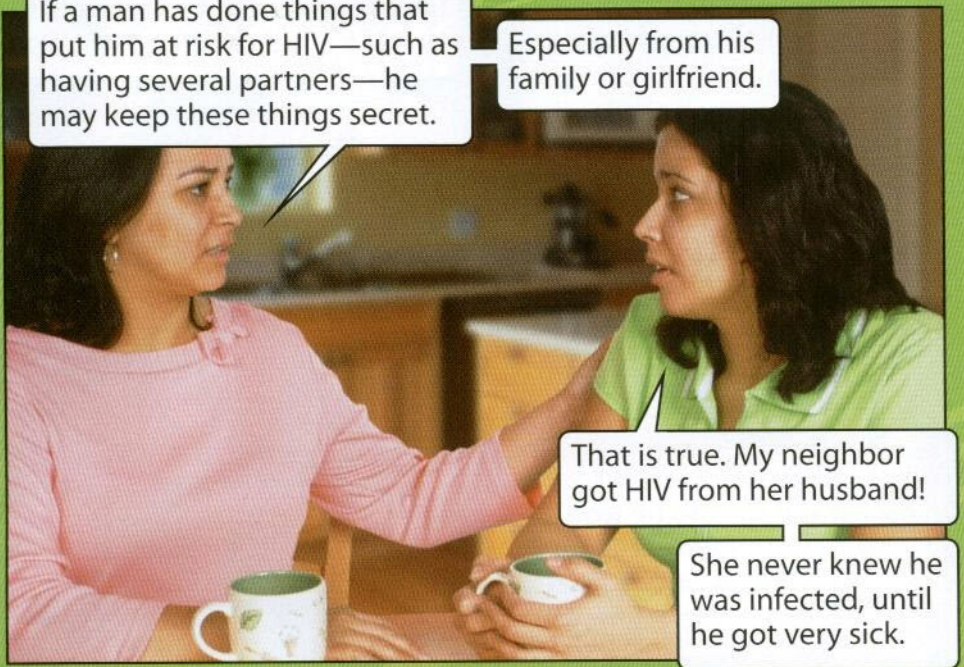
That's not true! Many people who have HIV got it from sex between a man and a woman.



Alma, anyone can get HIV if they have sex with someone who has it.

But Ramon is not sick. He is very healthy.

Many people with HIV do not look or feel sick. But they can still give HIV to others.



If a man has done things that put him at risk for HIV—such as having several partners—he may keep these things secret.

Especially from his family or girlfriend.

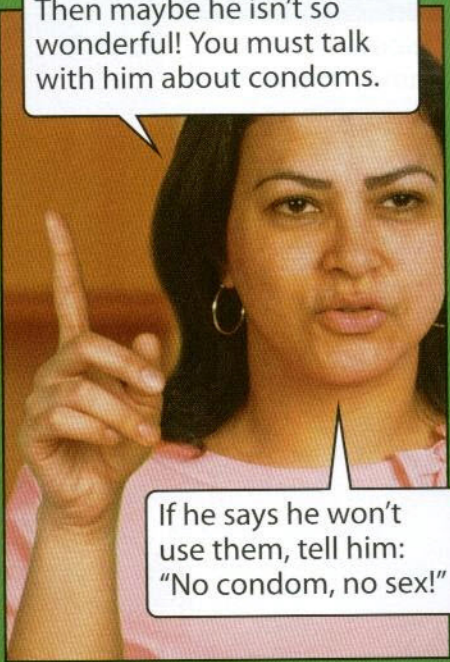
That is true. My neighbor got HIV from her husband!

She never knew he was infected, until he got very sick.

You see? Women like us can get HIV. Not having sex is the only sure way to avoid HIV.


But if you do have sex, condoms can help protect you.

I can't ask Ramon to use condoms! What if he says he won't use them? Or, what if he gets angry?

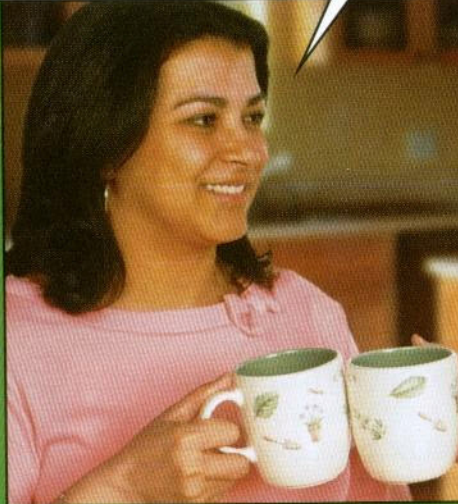


Then maybe he isn't so wonderful! You must talk with him about condoms.


If he says he won't use them, tell him: "No condom, no sex!"



I guess you are right, Teresa. No man is worth risking my life...



It's important we take care of ourselves first, Alma. Then, we can stay healthy and be there for our family and loved ones.



Thanks for talking to me, Teresa. You are a good sister. I will talk with Ramon about this... before we decide to have sex.



# Make wise choices— stay safe from HIV.

Like Alma, choose to protect yourself and your loved ones.

## **Talk to your partner about using condoms.**

Not having sex is safest, but if you think you may have sex:

- ◆ Talk before you have sex.
- ◆ Do not accuse your partner of anything. Instead, tell your partner that using condoms is best for both of you.
- ◆ Be prepared. Carry a condom with you.
- ◆ If your partner refuses to use a condom, do not have sex with him.
- ◆ Do not use drugs or alcohol before sex. You may forget to use a condom.

**If your partner threatens to hurt you, get help right away.**

## **Use male latex condoms if you decide to have sex.**

Condoms aren't 100% effective. But they can help protect against HIV. Use a new latex condom for each act of vaginal, anal or oral sex.

For vaginal sex, if you can't use a male latex condom, you may be able to use a polyurethane condom for women.

## **If you shoot drugs, get help to stop.**

- ◆ Call the National Drug Helpline—1-800-662-4357. Help is available in English and Spanish.
- ◆ Never share or reuse needles, syringes or any other drug equipment.
- ◆ Use a new, clean needle and syringe every time.

**Share this information with your partner, and your friends and family.**

# Get tested for HIV.

## There is a simple, safe test.

The test is often low- or no-cost. Ask your doctor or clinic about confidential and anonymous testing. Remember, even if your test for HIV is negative, your partner could still have HIV.

## If you are sexually active, consider getting an HIV test every year.

Or, get tested as often as your doctor recommends. Be sure to learn the results. Talk to your doctor, clinic or HIV counselor about what your results mean.

## Find out where to get tested.

Contact:

- ◆ your doctor or clinic
- ◆ your state or local health department
- ◆ CDC-INFO (English and Spanish)  
—1-800-CDC-INFO  
(1-800-232-4636)  
—1-888-232-6348 (TTY).

## If you have HIV, treatment can help you stay healthy.

- ◆ Talk to your doctor or clinic. You may be able to get low- or no-cost treatment.
- ◆ Don't wait to get treatment! Get help right away.
- ◆ If you are pregnant, treatment can help your unborn baby.

**Talk to your partner, friends and family about getting tested, too.**

