

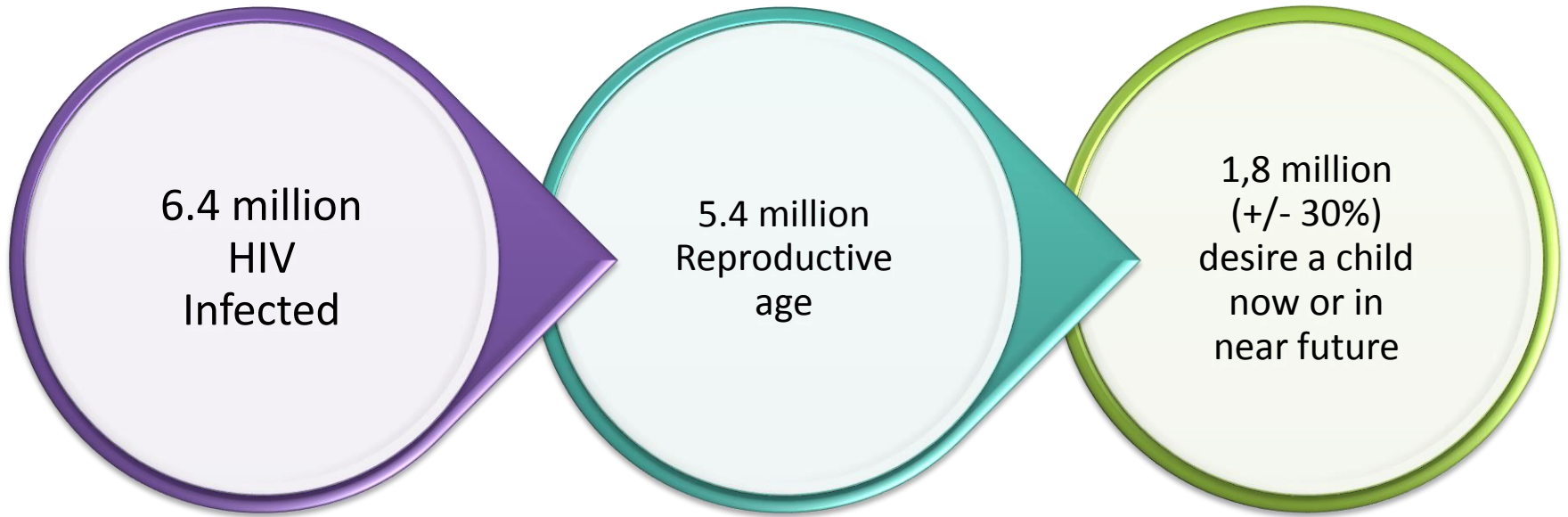


# **A Practical Guide to Safer Conception for HIV-affected Couples**

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26 September 2014

# Background

## South Africa



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# Minimising the Risks

Conceiving in the context of HIV involves risks:

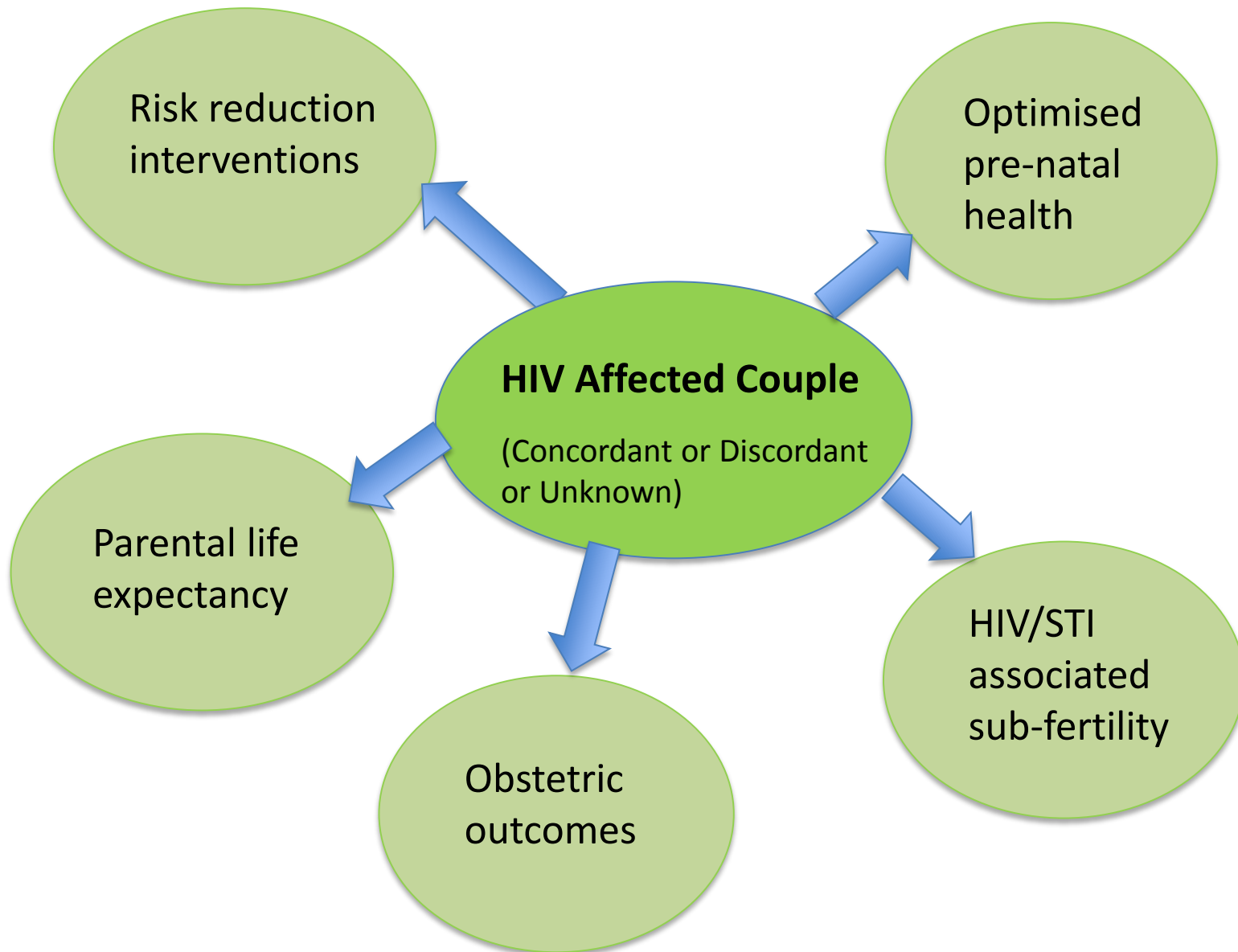
- Sexual transmission
- Mother-to-child transmission
- Maternal and infant outcomes

**Game changer: Effective ART**

**We can now support couples to become healthy Moms and Dads with HIV negative children**



# Key Aspects to Consider



# First Step: Ask the Question



- **ASK**
- **ALL** females and males
- Of **reproductive age**
- About their **fertility desires**

↓  
**No**

↓  
**Yes**

If you don't ask you won't know

# Package of Care - Female

## All females

1. Comprehensive history including fertility
2. Optimise comorbid condition management
3. Medication review – teratogenic drugs?
4. Discontinue any contraception
5. **STI screening & treatment**
  - RPR & Hep B screen
6. Pap smear
7. Haemoglobin, Rh
8. Folate 5mg daily
9. **Consider Rubella testing and immunisation**
10. Understanding their ovulatory cycle
11. General healthy lifestyle advice
  - smoking, alcohol, exercise, stress
12. Repeat pregnancy testing



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## HIV Positive Females

1. **Undetectable viral load**
  - Initiate if not already on ART
  - Adherence support
  - Viral load monitoring
2. **Optimise health**
  - CD4 > 200
  - TB/OI screen



## HIV Negative Females

1. Monthly HIV testing
2. Offer PrEP

## Females with unknown status

1. Offer HIV testing and counselling



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# Package of Care - Male

## All males

1. Comprehensive history including fertility
2. Optimise comorbid condition management
3. STI screening & treatment
  - RPR & Hep B screen
4. Advise about medical male circumcision (MMC)



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## **HIV Positive Males**

### **1. Undetectable viral load**

- Initiate if not already on ART
- Adherence support
- Viral load monitoring

### **2. Optimise health**

- TB/OI screen



## **HIV Negative Males**

1. Monthly HIV testing
2. Offer PrEP

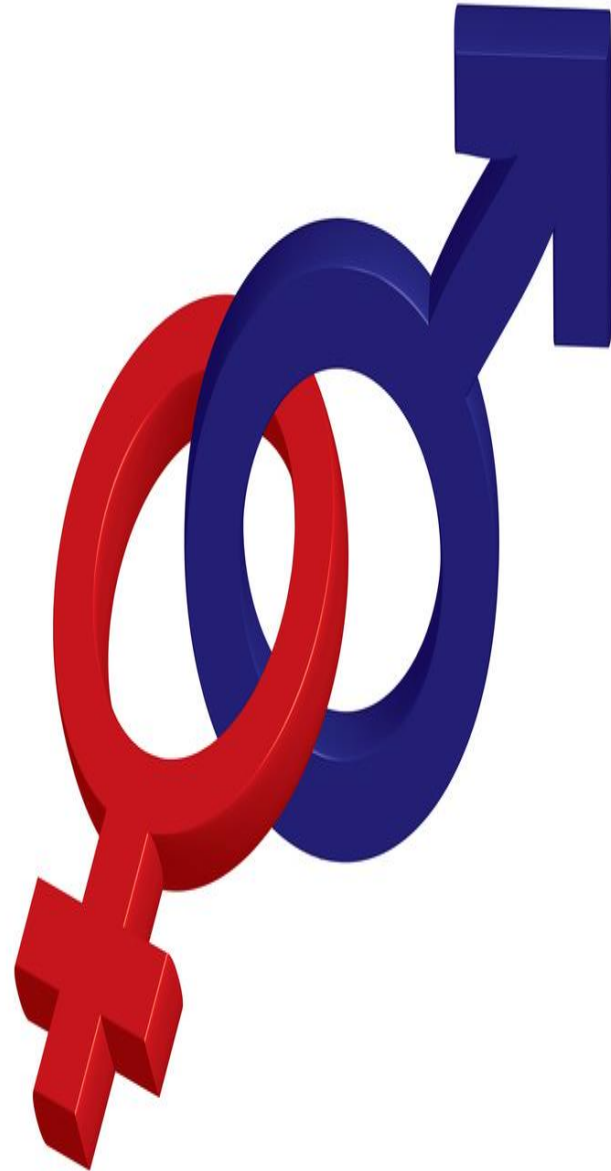
## **Males with unknown status**

1. Offer HIV testing and counselling

# Package of Care – Couple

## All couples

1. Consistent condom use
  - Outside fertile window
  - If pregnancy confirmed
2. Discuss risks
  - Transmission: partner, baby
  - Pregnancy outcomes
  - Advanced maternal age
  - Parental life expectancy
- Counselling about safer conception options



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# Timing...timing...timing

Fertile window/timing of conception:

- menstrual calendar
- cervical mucus monitoring
  - Kindara app

Fertility Level:



Low

High

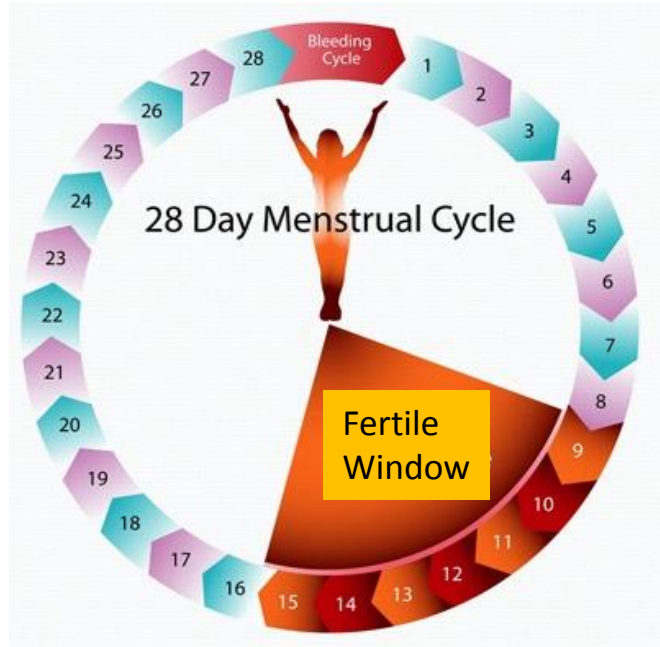
Peak

High

Source: [http://nfp.marquette.edu/monitor\\_cervical\\_mucus.php](http://nfp.marquette.edu/monitor_cervical_mucus.php)

- ovulation test kits

- Couples attempt to conceive during the fertile window
- Couple uses no condom 2 or 3 times per cycle



# Menstrual Calendar Example 1

An example:

Year	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
	January				Red	Red	Red	Red																												
	February		Red	Red	Red	Red	Red																										Grey	Grey		
	March				Red	Red	Red	Red																												
	April	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red							Blue	Green	Green	Green																Red	Grey			
	May		Red	Red	Red								Blue	Green	Green	Green																				
	June	Red										Blue	Green	Green	Green														Red	Red	Red	Red	Grey			
	July									Blue	Green	Green	Green																							
	August																																			
	September																																		Grey	
	October																																			
	November																																			Grey
	December																																			

Days when woman menstruating (bleeding)	Red
Days when partner may abstain from ejaculating	Blue
Days when couple have sex without a condom	Green
Days when, if couple has sex, they use a condom	White



# Example 2

## MENSTRUAL CYCLE DIARY

MONTH \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

PID \_\_\_\_\_

Cycle day (Day 1 is 1st Day of menses)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40						
Day of month <i>(If 1st day of period this month is Jan 14, write 14 under cycle day 1, 15 under cycle day 2, etc.)</i>																																														
Menstruation/Period (If yes mark X)																																														
Vaginal intercourse <i>(List number of sex acts occurring that day)</i>																																														
Vaginal intercourse without a condom <i>(List number of sex acts without condom that day)</i>																																														
Self-insemination (If yes mark X)																																														
Cervical mucus present (If yes mark X)																																														
HSV genital outbreak (If yes mark X)																																														
Pregnancy Test Done (If yes mark X)																																														
Pregnancy Test Result (+ / -)																																														

NOTES:

If you have more than 40 days in your cycle, start a new sheet, where cycle day 1 is day 41, cycle day 2, 42, etc. When menstruation comes, then start another new sheet on Day 1



# Safer Conception Strategies

- Timed peri-ovulatory unprotected intercourse
- Intravaginal self-insemination



Lie on back with knees bent

Place a cushion under hips

Slowly push semen from syringe into vagina

Stay on your back for 1 hour

## **If successful:**

- Immediate ANC referral
- Emphasise return to consistent condom use
- Ensure HIV negative partner continues re-testing

## **If unsuccessful after 6-12 months:**

- Fertility workup/referral
- Counsel about risks of on-going attempts



# Thank you

Resources on request  
[ndavies@wrhi.ac.za](mailto:ndavies@wrhi.ac.za)

