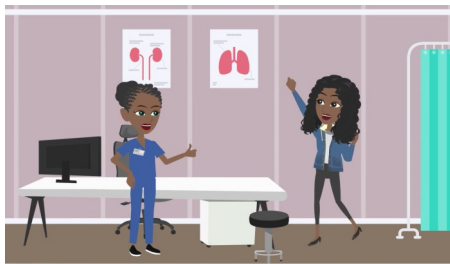
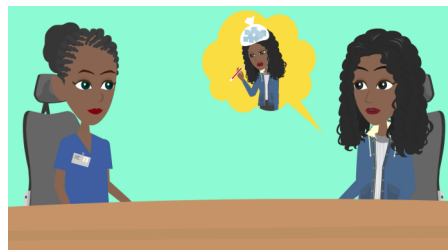




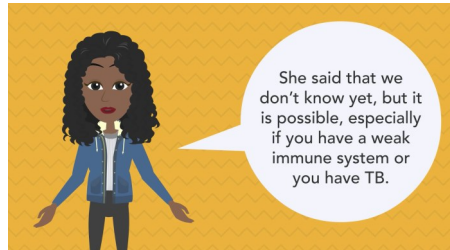
She also shared my viral load result which showed that my viral load is UN-DETECTABLE!



I was so happy – my virus levels were so low that they weren't even visible in the body.



I asked her what will happen if I get COVID19 and whether I would get more sick as I have HIV?

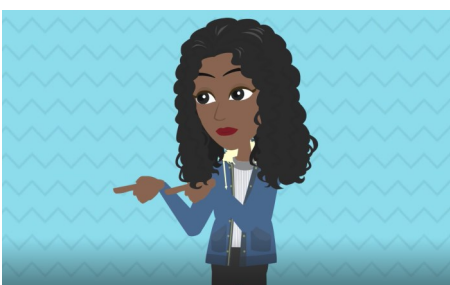


She said that we do not know yet, but it is possible, especially if you have a weak immune system or if you have TB.

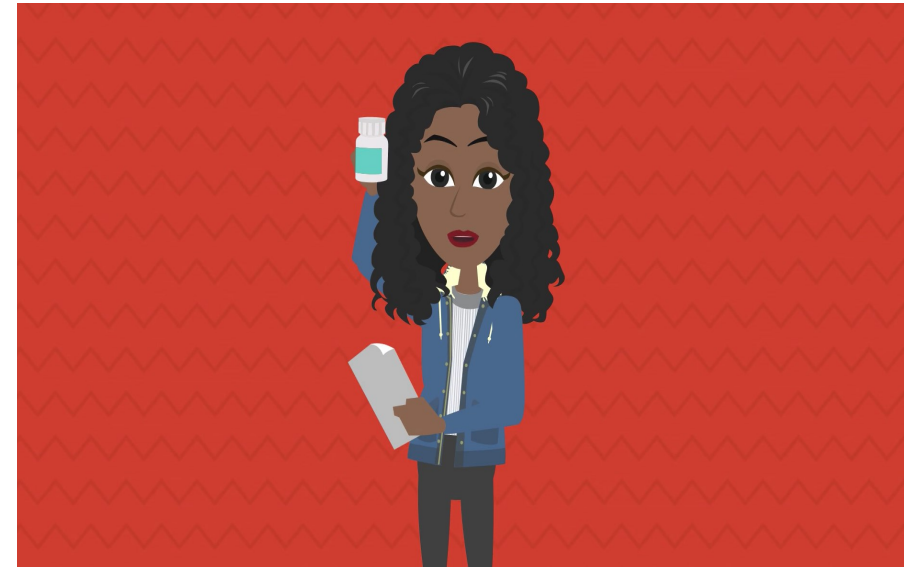
That's why it's so important that I keep taking my ARVs and my TB medicines.



I felt so much better when I left the clinic, as I knew that I had everything I needed to stay healthy and safe.



So, make sure you do too!

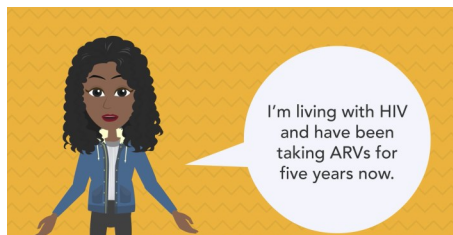


Talking about COVID 19, HIV and ARVs

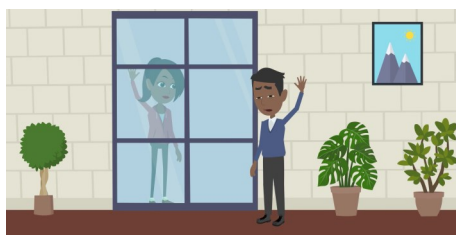


Written and produced by Zvandiri Youth

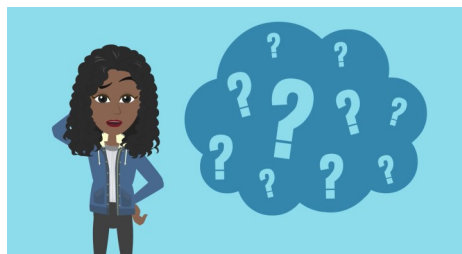
www.africaid-zvandiri.org



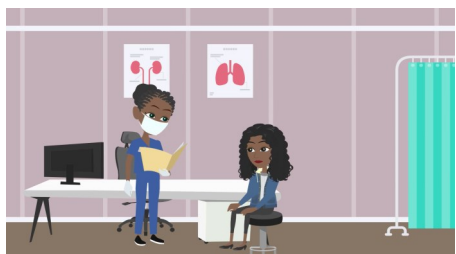
My name is Fatima. I'm living with HIV and have been taking ARVs for five years now. I know I must take my ARVs every day if I am to stay healthy and strong.



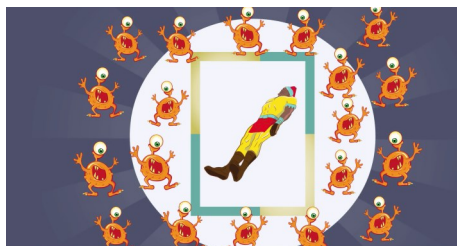
So when I started hearing about the new coronavirus, or COVID-19, I started to get really worried. I've heard that social distancing and lockdowns are being put in place to prevent the virus from spreading.



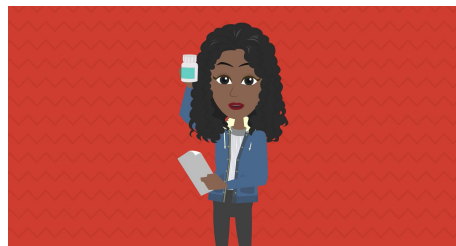
That makes sense, but what does this mean for me, my HIV positive status and my ARVs? Will I be able to keep healthy and also go to my clinic for my resupply of medicines?



I thought others might have the same concerns so let me tell you what my nurse at the clinic told me. As COVID-19 is a new virus, we do not know yet how it will affect people living with HIV.



But what we do know is that if you do not take your ARVs, HIV will be able to damage your immune system, meaning you are more likely to get infections.



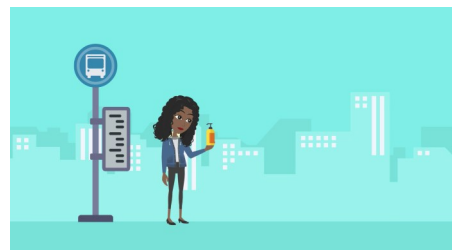
It is just as important to take ARVs regularly now as it was before COVID-19. This means you must not run out of medicines.



My nurse told me that the health clinics are still open and we should all go for our normal review dates. She also said I should try to come early in the morning as some pharmacies close before lunch.



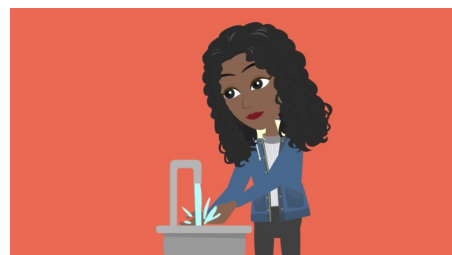
While sitting on the bus, I made sure to keep 1-2 metres distance from all the other passengers and to touch as little as possible. Everyone else was doing the same which made it easier.



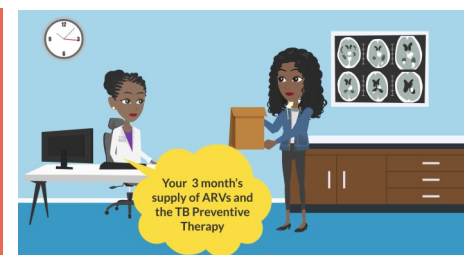
I was so aware of not touching my face in case I touched something with COVID-19. When I got off the bus I made sure to use one of the proper hand sanitisers.



At the clinic, they told us to wait outside as they only wanted to see a few people at a time. We had to queue 1-2 metre distance apart. I saw some friends there, and practised greeting them with a wave rather than a hug.



Once inside the clinic I was allowed to wash my hands before going anywhere.



I was given 3 month's supply of ARVs and enough pills to finish my TB Preventive Therapy. The nurse said it was good that I was taking TB Preventive Therapy, as you don't want to have COVID-19 and TB at the same time.