

HANDOUT 9.2. COUNSELLING CARDS ON MANAGING HIV-RELATED SYMPTOMS

THEME 5 MANAGE DIET RELATED HIV/AIDS SYMPTOMS

5.1 LOSS OF APPETITE

Have a warm drink soon after waking in the morning or shortly before going to bed to help stimulate appetite.



- I. Explain that loss of appetite is a common symptom in PLWHA and can reduce food intake.
- II. Discuss with the client ways to help increase appetite:
 - Do physical exercises that are possible in his/her health condition to help stimulate appetite.
 - Eat small amounts of food five or six times a day.
 - Use favourite foods and spices to boost appetite.
 - Take a warm drink soon after waking up in the morning and/or shortly before going to bed.
- III. Explain to the client that it is important to inform his/her care provider about loss of appetite.
 - Loss of appetite may be a symptom of an infection or a side effect of drugs.
 - Medical attention may be required.
- IV. If loss of appetite is very bad, advise the client to take a daily multivitamin in consultation with a health provider to help maintain good nutritional status.
- V. Advise the client to ensure adequate food intake by eating nutrient-dense foods such as the following:
 - A mixture of groundnuts and simsim paste eaten on bread or as a sauce to accompany food
 - Porridge made out of millet, maize, soya, sorghum or rice prepared with milk, sugar, honey and/or egg
 - Main meal of katogo or mugoyo

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5.3 MOUTH SORES AND ORAL THRUSH

Oral thrush: A woman cleaning her mouth with cotton using salty water



- I. Explain that mouth sores or thrush is a common opportunistic infection in PLWHA that can affect eating.
- II. Discuss with the client the importance of cleaning the mouth to manage painful sores in the mouth.
 - Cleaning the mouth helps prevent infection, stop infection from spreading and promote healing.
 - To clean, use cotton wool with mildly salty warm water. If possible, rinse the mouth with 1 teaspoon baking soda mixed in a glass of warm boiled water.
 - Clean at least twice a day: morning and evening, and preferably after every meal.
- III. Describe the dietary measures that can be used to relieve sores in the mouth.
 - Eat fermented products such as yoghurt.
 - Eat soft foods such as mashed food, soups and juices.
 - Drink liquids using a straw to ease painful swallowing.
 - Eat ripe paw paw to help heal the wounds.
 - Drink or rinse mouth with sour water (to make sour water, soak 1 cup of grains or cereals in 3 cups of cool boiled water for 2–3 days and cover while fermenting).
 - Avoid acidic foods such as lemon and oranges.

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5.1 ANAEMIA

A woman picking dark green leafy vegetables in a makeshift garden



- I. Tell the client that anaemia is common in PLWHA and may contribute to general body weakness. It weakens the body's ability to fight infections.
- II. Explain that eating foods that are rich in iron can help prevent and treat anaemia.
- III. Identify and discuss with the client foods rich in iron that are accessible to the client.
 - Animal foods such as meat, fish and eggs
 - Dark green leafy vegetables (e.g., spinach, sukuma wiki, dodo, nnakati)
 - Avocado leaves, purple hibiscus leaves, cassava leaves, and potato leaves
 - Fruits rich in vitamin C such as oranges and mangoes because vitamin C helps the body absorb iron
- IV. Emphasise that the client needs to:
 - Have haemoglobin checked at least every 3 months.
 - Get de-wormed at least every 6 months.
 - Avoid drinking coffee or tea, especially with meals, because it reduces the absorption of iron by the body.
 - Treat malaria as soon as noticed.
 - Use iron supplements BUT only after consulting with a health provider.
- V. Refer the client to a nutritionist or health worker if the cause of anaemia is not likely to be diet related (e.g., the ARV Zidovudine can cause anaemia).