

A – Abstinence

Abstinence means not doing something; it can mean not drinking. It can mean not smoking. In sexual terms, **abstinence** means not making sex.

Ab-sti-nence is different from **ab-sence**, which means being away from something, for example, if children miss a school class, they are marked **absent**.

You can **abstain** from running, even if you go to the athletics meet. If you are **absent** from the game, you are not there at all.

In relationships, **abstinence** means not making sex.

Remember:

- You may still love your partner and be with them without making sex.
- If you already made sex, you can still choose to abstain.
- The fewer times you make sex, the less chance of getting HIV.
- An infected person can look healthy for many years before getting sick.
- You may trust your partner, but why should you trust your partner's previous partner?

ABSTINENCE IS THE ONLY 100% EFFECTIVE PROTECTION AGAINST THE SEXUAL TRANSMISSION OF HIV

You can become infected in other non-sexual ways. See the HIV Fact Sheet.

B – Be Faithful

Be faithful means only having one sex partner in a loving and trusting relationship. You don't have to be married. You don't have to be a Christian. **Being faithful** is when you are just with one person. Having a partner is about honesty and love between two people. It is about trust, and it is about faith in each other. In a loving and faithful relationship, you can talk openly about sex, condoms, pregnancy and HIV without any fear.

C – Use a Condom

If you **use a condom** correctly and consistently (every time you have any kind of sex) you will have 97% effective protection against pregnancy, sexual diseases and HIV/AIDS.

You have to know how to **use condoms** correctly for them to work well. Remember that **male** or **female condoms** only protect you from HIV if they are used:

- every time you make sex
- only one at a time
- new and undamaged
- with the correct water-based lubricant like K-Y

Remember: Never reuse a condom.