

**MODERN ART FOR UGANDA**

# **ART PREGNANCY & WOMEN'S HEALTH**

Everyone with HIV needs to  
take HIV treatment – called  
antiretroviral therapy, ART or ARVs

**NOVEMBER 2020**



# CAN POSITIVE PEOPLE HAVE HIV NEGATIVE CHILDREN?

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt with the text 'HIV POSITIVE' and 'I AM HERE TO STAY' on it. A red speech bubble with the word 'YES!' in white capital letters points to her from the right.

**YES!**


ART protects your baby from HIV during pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding.

Talk to your nurse or doctor about it.

**IS THE TREATMENT  
THE SAME FOR  
PREGNANT WOMEN  
AS FOR OTHER HIV  
POSITIVE PEOPLE?**

Ugandan guidelines now recommend ART for everyone with HIV, whatever their CD4 count or viral load.





**This includes  
pregnant women  
and women  
who wish to  
get pregnant.**

**There are a few extra  
things for women  
to consider  
when starting  
or taking ART.**

**We explain these  
in this booklet.**

# ARV COMBINATION

## FOR UGANDA



The first-line combination of ARVs in Uganda is: tenofovir, lamivudine and dolutegravir. This combination is sometimes called TLD.

The older first-line combination was based on a drug called efavirenz.



# **DOLUTEGRAVIR & PREGNANCY**

**There is a very slightly higher rate of neural tube defects than normal in babies whose mothers become pregnant on dolutegravir.**

**But starting dolutegravir after six weeks or more of pregnancy does not have this risk.**



# WHAT IS A NEURAL TUBE DEFECT?

The neural tube in a developing baby is what becomes the brain, spinal cord, skull and spine.

The neural tube closes in the first 28 days of pregnancy – that is before most women know they are pregnant.

If it does not fully close for some reason, the baby is said to have a neural tube defect.





**Neural tube defects vary, from very minor ones that are easily fixed, to ones that give severe disability and even death.**

**So, the risk is taken very seriously by the department of health, health workers and patients.**



**CAN HIV POSITIVE**

**WOMEN SAFELY TAKE**

**DOLUTEGRAVIR?**

**YES\***

But with a few extra considerations.

- \* All HIV positive women should be told of their options to help them select the appropriate ARV combination with their health worker.

**WHAT IF I AM**

**ALREADY**

**PREGNANT?**

If you are already pregnant and taking dolutegravir-based ART, you will be recommended to continue on it.

If you are less than six week pregnant, you will be recommended the efavirenz-based combination.

**WHAT IF I**

**DO NOT WANT TO**

**FALL PREGNANT?**

If you do not wish to become pregnant, and you are using effective contraception, you will be recommended the dolutegravir-based combination.

Effective contraception means a modern method: condoms, oral contraceptives, injectable, implant and IUCD.

## **WHAT IF I DO WANT TO BECOME PREGNANT?**

If you plan to become pregnant you should be given all the necessary information on dolutegravir- and efavirenz-based combinations.

This includes the risk of neural tube defects. Be sure you have been given all the information you need. Your health worker must note that you have made an informed choice. This information must be included in your chart/file.

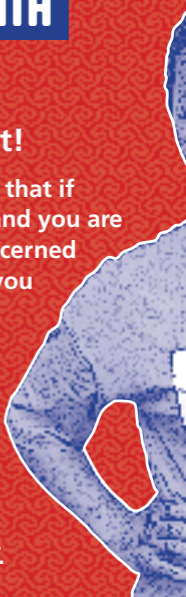
# **MAKE SURE YOU ARE COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR DECISION**

**This is very important!**

It is also important to know that if you decide to have a baby and you are taking dolutegravir and concerned about neural tube defects, you can switch to efavirenz.

Or if you chose to take efavirenz around conception you can change to dolutegravir later.

You can switch if your viral load is undetectable on ART.





**TAKE CARE**

**OF YOURSELF**

Your own health and your own HIV treatment are the most important things to consider for ensuring a healthy baby.



# UNDERSTAND

# YOUR OPTIONS

Make sure you understand your options – including looking at information like this leaflet.

Make sure your health workers discuss your options with you and respect your decision.





Find out more about treatment  
and the free app at:  
[www.modernartforsouthafrica.co.za](http://www.modernartforsouthafrica.co.za)

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