

## Respect & Protect

By respecting and protecting ourselves and others we can stop the spread of HIV and HIV prejudice.

5 things you can do to Respect & Protect:

1. Find out the facts about HIV and talk to your friends and colleagues about HIV – make sure they know the reality, not the myths.
2. Know your HIV status: get tested if you have put yourself at risk.
3. Talk to all new sexual partners about using condoms. Using a condom during sex (especially vaginal or anal sex) is the best way to protect yourself and your partner from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
4. If someone tells you they are HIV positive, treat them with respect and don't tell others without their agreement.
5. Wear a red ribbon as a symbol of your support for everyone affected by HIV, and to raise awareness.

### World AIDS Day

Started on 1st December 1988, World AIDS Day is about raising money, increasing awareness, fighting prejudice and improving education. The World AIDS Day theme for 2009 is 'Universal Access and Human Rights'. World AIDS Day is important in reminding people that HIV has not gone away, and that there are many things still to be done.

According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now 33.4 million people living with HIV, including 2.1 million children. During 2008 some 2.7 million people became newly infected with the virus and an estimated 2 million people died from AIDS.<sup>1</sup> Around half of all people who become infected with HIV do so before they are 25 and are killed by AIDS before they are 35.<sup>2</sup>

The vast majority of people with HIV and AIDS live in lower- and middle-income countries. But HIV today is a threat to men, women and children on all continents around the world.

The theme for World AIDS Day 2009 is 'Universal Access and Human Rights'. Global leaders have pledged to work towards universal access to HIV and AIDS treatment, prevention and care, recognising these as fundamental human rights. Valuable progress has been made in increasing access to HIV and AIDS services, yet greater commitment is needed around the world if the goal of universal access is to be achieved. Millions of people continue to be infected with HIV every year. In low- and middle-income countries, less than half of those in need of antiretroviral therapy are receiving it, and too many do not have access to adequate care services.<sup>3</sup>

The protection of human rights is fundamental to combating the global HIV and AIDS epidemic. Violations against human rights fuel the spread of HIV, putting marginalised groups, such as injecting drug users and sex workers, at a higher risk of HIV infection. By promoting individual human rights, new infections can be prevented and people who have HIV can live free from discrimination.

World AIDS Day provides an opportunity for all of us - individuals, communities and political leaders - to take action and ensure that human rights are protected and global targets for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care are met.