TALKING ABOUT COVID-19, HIV AND ARVs
HI MY NAME IS FATIMA

I'M LIVING WITH HIV AND HAVE BEEN TAKING ARVs FOR 5 YEARS NOW. I AM FIT AND HEALTHY

WHEN I STARTED HEARING ABOUT THE NEW CORONAVIRUS, OR COVID-19, I GOT VERY WORRIED GIVEN MY STATUS

REGULAR WASHING OF HANDS

PHYSICAL DISTANCING
And staying at home are encouraged to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.

That makes sense, but what does that mean for me, my HIV-positive status and taking my medications?

So, let me tell you what I have learnt from my nurse at the clinic:

Will I be able to keep healthy and also go to my clinic when I’m sick or my resupply of medicines?
COVID 19 is a new virus which can infect everyone, including those with HIV.

Making us more likely to get infections, including COVID-19.

So we must continue adhering to our ARVs as normal.

For children, young people and adults living with HIV if we don’t take our ARVs, HIV will multiply and damage our immune system...
My nurse told me the health clinics are still open...

You should also continue to have your viral load and CD4 count test as usual once a year.

And we should all go for our normal review dates.

You can go to the nearest clinic, even if it isn’t your normal clinic and still get your ARV medicines from there.
When we meet friends, let’s try to greet them with a wave and avoid handshakes or hugs.

At the clinic we are not supposed to be in crowds or sit in groups. We should keep 1 metre apart and listen to instructions given by the nurses.

If you can it is best for you or an adult to contact the health facility by phone first to make an appointment and for any enquiries.
I was given three months supply of ARVs so I don't have to go to the clinic so often. People taking medications for TB, diabetes, hypertension, family planning or other health conditions must continue their treatment.

For people involved in community and family refill groups:

One person from the group should collect the ARVs from the clinic.
I asked my nurse what will happen if I have COVID-19 when I’m also HIV-positive, and whether I would get more sick?

She said that we do not know yet, but it is possible to get more sick, especially if you have a weak immune system or if you have TB.
I therefore need to make sure that I adhere to my medicines everyday, keep healthy and also keep a positive mindset.

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 collect your medications and stay healthy.