Promoting Agricultural Workers Healthy Lifestyle through HIV/AIDS Testing, Prevention, and Treatment

A Story About Sexual Health and HIV among Agricultural Workers

Hello! Our health center is offering free HIV testing today. May I ask, have you ever been tested for HIV?

Hi! Tested for HIV? No... Do you know what HIV is?

Yes, HIV or the human immunodeficiency virus is a virus that can spread through blood, semen, and vaginal fluids when people don't wear a condom during sex.

Hm, I've heard about HIV before. I think it is a disease people can get through sex, right?

Well, while some people may have a higher risk than others, any person can get HIV, it doesn't matter if they are male or female or who they have sex with.

Oh, but we are a couple, so that doesn't affect us!

That's right! I've heard that only gay people get HIV.

Oh, I didn't know that!
Yes, and there are other risks like:

- Not wearing a condom.
- Having more than one sexual partner.
- Sharing needles to inject drugs.
- Using unclean tattoo equipment.

Women can also transmit HIV to their babies when they are pregnant, give birth, or through breastfeeding.

Is HIV very serious? What could happen?

HIV attacks the body and can become AIDS, or the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, if not treated.

Are HIV and AIDS the same?

That’s a great question! No, they are not the same. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV, which makes your body so weak that it cannot fight other illnesses. People can die from AIDS.
That's exactly why we are here today, to offer free testing to agricultural workers so you don't have to spend money or worry about driving to a health center. We can explain everything and get it done right now!

But, what if either of us have HIV?

Well, that information you gave us made me interested, but we don't have any money right now and we have to go to work in the fields.

That's exactly why we are here today, to offer free testing to agricultural workers so you don't have to spend money or worry about driving to a health center. We can explain everything and get it done right now!

Thank you for sharing that with me. It's important to trust your health provider when talking about this topic. I understand and we are here to help. We have this mobile unit here to test each person separately and it doesn't take long. The results are confidential and only shared with the patient.

It's important to know if you have HIV and need to seek treatment, since there is no cure, and you might not have symptoms. The good news is that there are medicines you can take to manage the virus and lower your risk of infection, so you don't pass it on to others.

Oh, I forgot my boots in the car. I'll be right back!

Well... I must confess that before we migrated to this community, I had sex with other women, but I don't want my girlfriend to have the wrong idea. If I get tested, she will think I have HIV and not want to be with me.

Oh wow! Well, we really don't talk about HIV, AIDS, or anything about sex where we come from.

Yes, growing up sex wasn't something my parents talked about with me. It's taboo in our culture.
I'm back! I was talking with other workers on my way here. They told me they got tested and got the results fast. I think it's important for both of us to get tested!

That's excellent! We want you to be informed and comfortable talking about sexual health. It is part of your physical health, and as an agricultural worker, you need a healthy body to move and get your work done in the fields. That's how you sustain yourself and provide for your family and we know that's important.

Of course! They depend on us and the work we do here in this country.

Ok, so are you ready for the test?

Well, I guess it wouldn't hurt.

Let's do it!

For more information and resources about HIV/AIDS, visit CDC national resources or HRSA state resources.

If you want to get tested, you can find a health center near you, visiting HRSA’s Find a Health Center website or by calling NCFH's Call for Health Helpline at 1 (800) 377-9968 or via WhatsApp at 1 (737) 414-5121.