

Medication

FUNDACION
LUCÍA

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Medication

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FUNDACIÓN LUCÍA

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Today I want to talk to you about the medication I take every day.

- 2 The pills and syrups are medicine and taking them is not fun. Everybody knows that, but medicine is also very important for our health.



I already shared with you the fact that I have a virus in my blood that attacks and tries to destroy my defences. That's why I need to defend my body everyday against this virus.

4

To do this I have millions and millions of cells to help.



Nowadays, medication is the most powerful weapon that infected people have to fight against the virus.

I'm lucky that I can control the damage that the virus does to my defences, because otherwise I would get weaker and weaker until I got really sick.

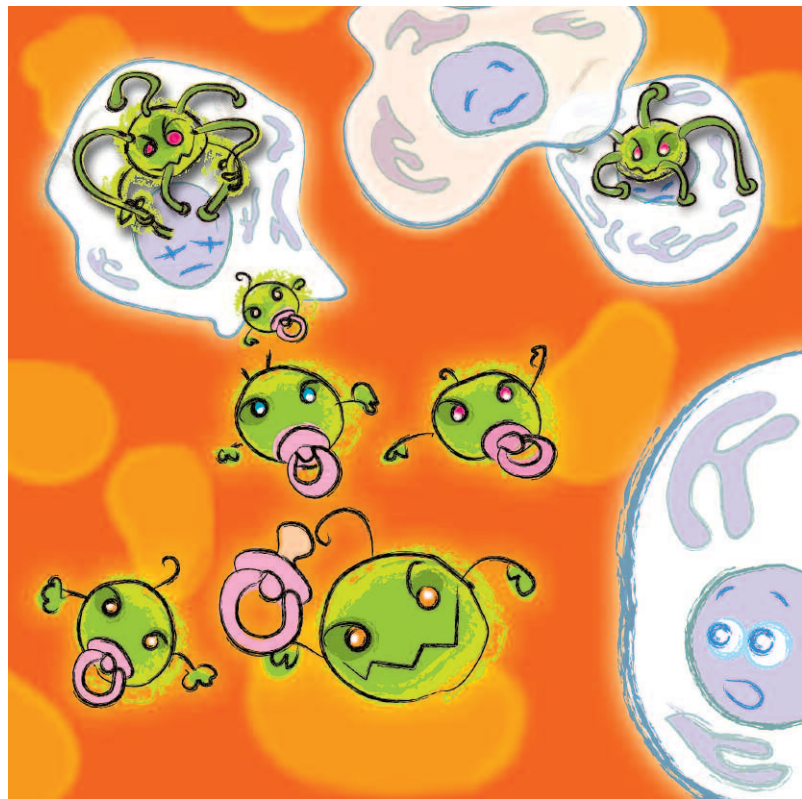


What I take is called antiretroviral medication.

To better understand how it works, we can imagine that cells are like eggs. The AIDS virus attacks the cells and damages them in different ways.

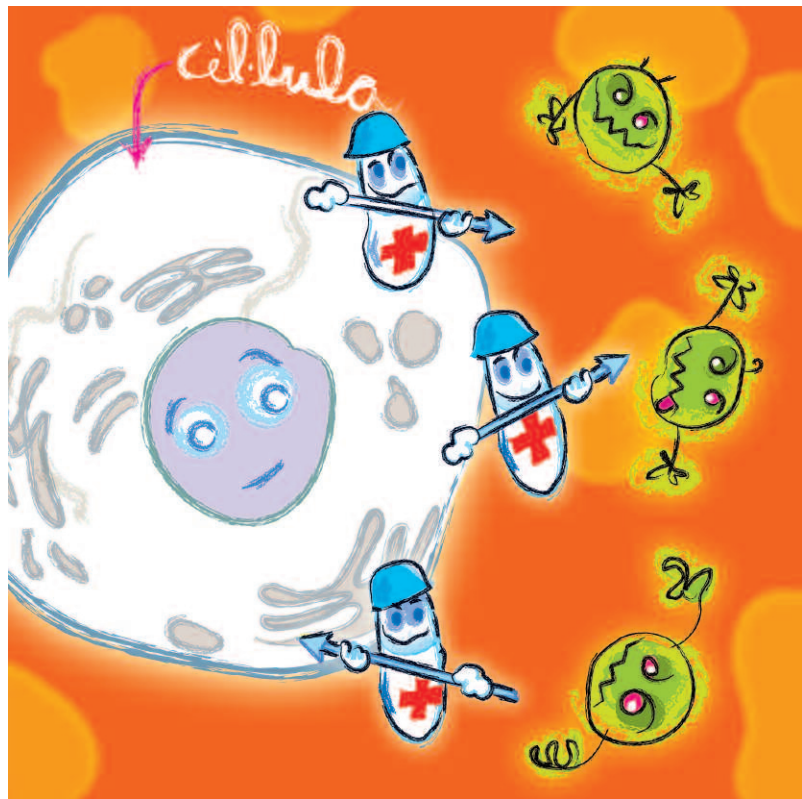
- 8 There are many different categories of antiretroviral medications that fight against the virus at different times. For example, some of them attack when the virus breaks the shell, others when the virus swims in the egg white and still others when the virus eats the yolk.

If the virus wins the fight, then it destroys the egg and many more new baby viruses are born which will attack other eggs (my cells).



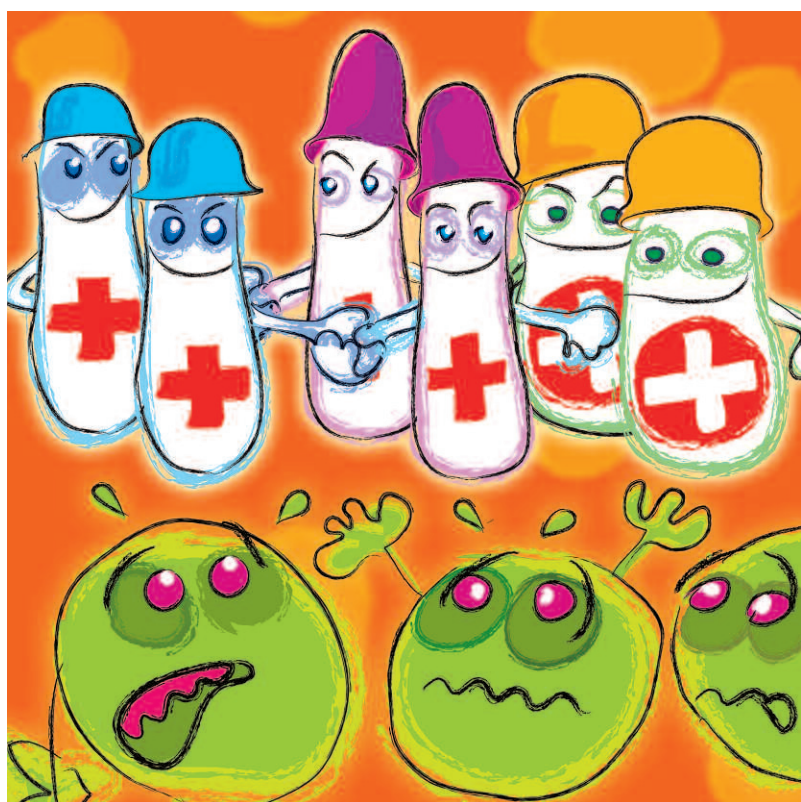
If we (me and the medication) win, there will be no new viruses to attack my other eggs/cells, and my health will get better.

10 Unfortunately, at this moment I can't eliminate the virus from my body completely, because if the virus feels it is going to lose the fight, it hides in a corner of the egg and waits until the fight calms down before it attacks again.



To sum it up, to fight the virus you have to have good defences with antiretroviral soldiers in all the right strategic positions.

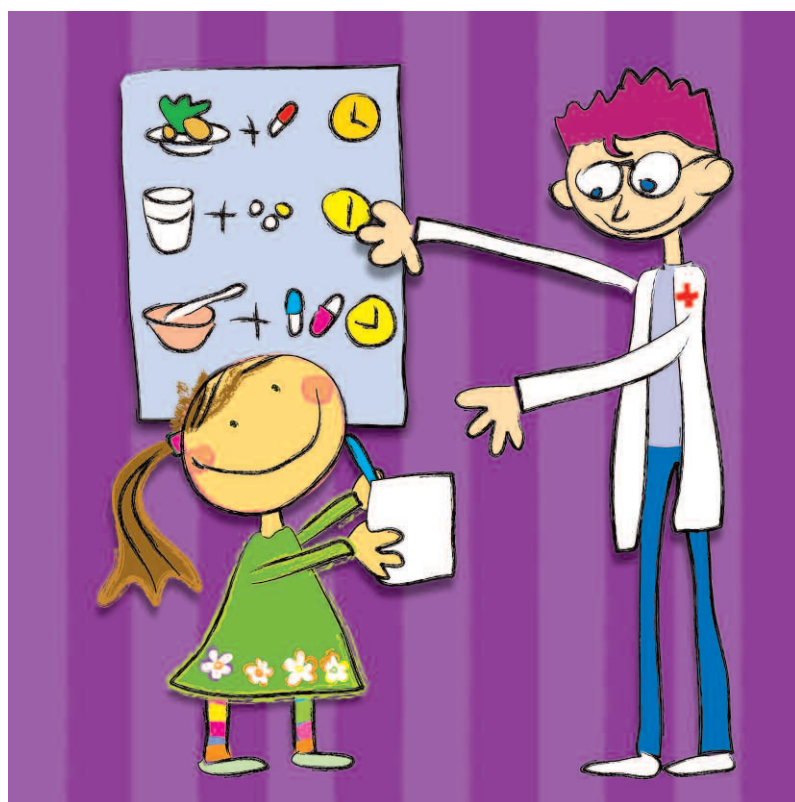
That's why my doctor insists that I take my medicine. I can't forget even one dose!



Taking antiretroviral treatment correctly is not easy. You have to take a lot of pills every day. You have to take them in the morning and again at night; some need to be taken with food and some without; some of them are big and fat and difficult to swallow, and others leave a bad taste in your mouth.

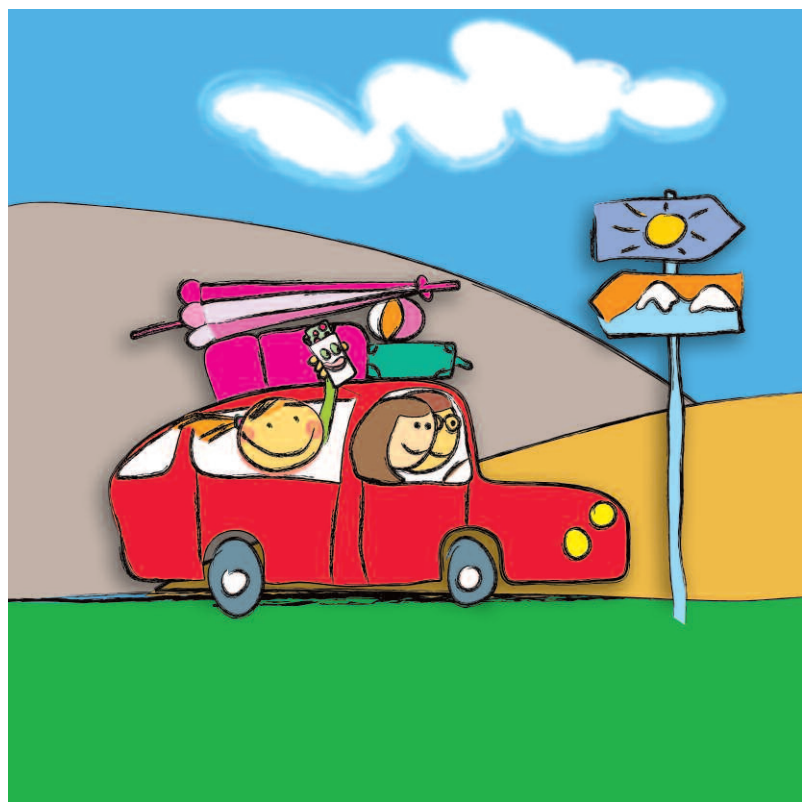
Even worse than that, some medicine makes me feel sick! Sometimes I feel like vomiting or I get diarrhoea. Other medicine gives me headaches or makes makes me feel tired.

I know it isn't easy, but I make it through with courage and with the love of the people close to me: my family, my friends at the hospital, and Xavi, the nurse who comes to my house to explain all I want to know about the virus and the medication.



It is very important not to forget even one dose. When I know that I'm not going to sleep in my house, I bring my medication with me in a plastic box. Try to find one that you really like to carry your medication with you!

Now it is not difficult for me to take my medicine correctly, as my body has gotten used to it and I feel better.



But I know it is a continuous fight, and if one day I forget to take my medicine, the virus that is hiding will get ready to fight and won't find many antiretroviral soldiers to fight back. In medical terms that's called "resistance to antiretroviral medication," and when this happens the medication can't beat the virus anymore.

Then my doctor would have to give me another treatment, which might be worse than the last one!



I know that taking medicine is not fun, but if a doctor prescribes some it is because it is essential for your health. And I care about my health, because when I'm in good health, I feel good. So I'm going to take my medicine every day and night.





ACTIVITIES

- 1 What is the name of your medication?
How many times a day do you take it?
- 2 What kind of medication do you like the least? Pills, syrups, etc.
- 3 What are the body's defences?
- 4 According to the story, why do we say that cells are like eggs?
- 5 How does the virus attack our defences?

NOTE FOR TEACHERS

These stories are written to explain to children between 7 and 13 years of age what is known about the HIV infection and AIDS: its origins; how it is thought that new pathogens appeared affecting humans; the transmission channels of this disease; the measures to prevent it, and also its clinical, social and emotional treatments.

These stories do not correspond to the story of the real Lucia who gave her name to the Foundation.

Here are some additional aspects to take into consideration:

- 1 Since some of the topics covered in these stories are difficult for children to understand, we recommend the participation of an adult to lead the reading and clarify and comment on any questions.
 - 2 The stories take place here, in Spain. Thanks to access to treatment, the quality of life for infected persons is generally good, but these circumstances are not the same in the rest of the world. There are many countries where HIV infection means certain death in a short time period.
 - 3 The treatments described in these stories are the same ones that were available when they were written. But other, more complicated treatments are being developed, and we hope that these treatments will be able to improve current ones.
 - 4 One of the main aims of these stories is to diminish the social stigma surrounding the disease and the people infected with it via an objective approach based on information.
 - 5 All stories were written to give answers and work on different questions when children ask to talk about these topics.
- This material was developed to support adults when they talk with children about HIV infection. For children in general, the material is a basic tool of information and knowledge towards preventing infection. For affected children, there are stories that can be read before their own diagnosis or a family member's diagnosis is known: the second story, "How Does My Body Work?", the fourth story, "Visiting the Hospital", the fifth story, "Trusting and Sharing" and the sixth story, "A Normal Day". All these stories are very useful for answering questions that children may ask when the topic is discussed with freedom.
- 6 All stories contain a minimum of 5 exercises for afterthought and consolidating knowledge.

- 1

The Family

We all have a family and a history.
- 2

How Does My Body Work?

Anatomical and physiological concepts necessary to better understand how to take care of our health and practice good prevention.
- 3

The History of HIV

This story goes over the origins of this new infection, the discovery of the pathogen that causes it and its transmission channels.
- 4

Visiting the Hospital

To have a good understanding of our health, it is necessary that we have periodic check-ups.
- 5

Trusting and Sharing

Due to social rejection, infected people have a right to intimacy in order to avoid discrimination and mistreatment. It is important to mention that if this is taken to the extreme, it can cause loneliness, because we all need each other and need to relate with one another. In life it is always important to evaluate with whom you can and want to share your secrets.
- 6

A Normal Day

The daily activities of a child who takes medication are different, and like all children they sometimes have more needs than adults do.
- 7

My Friends at the Hospital

The lives of people who are infected with HIV are affected by many realities, all of which have been taken into consideration here.
- 8

Medication

This story explains drug mechanisms to hinder the progression of the disease, as well as the need to use different types of drugs.
- 9

The Future

A future with hope is life's bond. This story explains how infected children make their plans for the future, as well as the most common questions they ask.
- 10

Children's Rights

This section is on the vulnerability of children and young people, and their rights.

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