

# The Family

FUNDACIÓN  
LUCÍA

Roser  
Calafell





# The family

Illustrated by Roser Calafell

## FUNDACIÓN LUCÍA

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Hello, I'm Lucía. I'm 10 years old. Today I would like to introduce you to my family.

My mom is Magdalena. She is 42 years old and works in a hotel.

Jordi is my dad. He is 45 and works in a bank.

Àlex is my big brother and he is twelve. Clara is the little one and she is one and a half.



Àlex and I go to the same school, and Clara will start kindergarten this year.

Last summer we spent a few days with our grandparents in Mataró, Rosa and Miquel. We also spent a few days with my other grandparents from Mallorca, Dora and Jan.

We are a happy family and we all love each other very much. When we get together for a party, we are a very big group!





We are just like any other family.

We feel good when good things happen. Some things make us worried and sometimes, some things make us sad.

How are we different from other families? Well, we have to look after our health very carefully, because we are HIV-positive. Well, actually not all of us; just some of us. Only my dad, my mom and I are infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

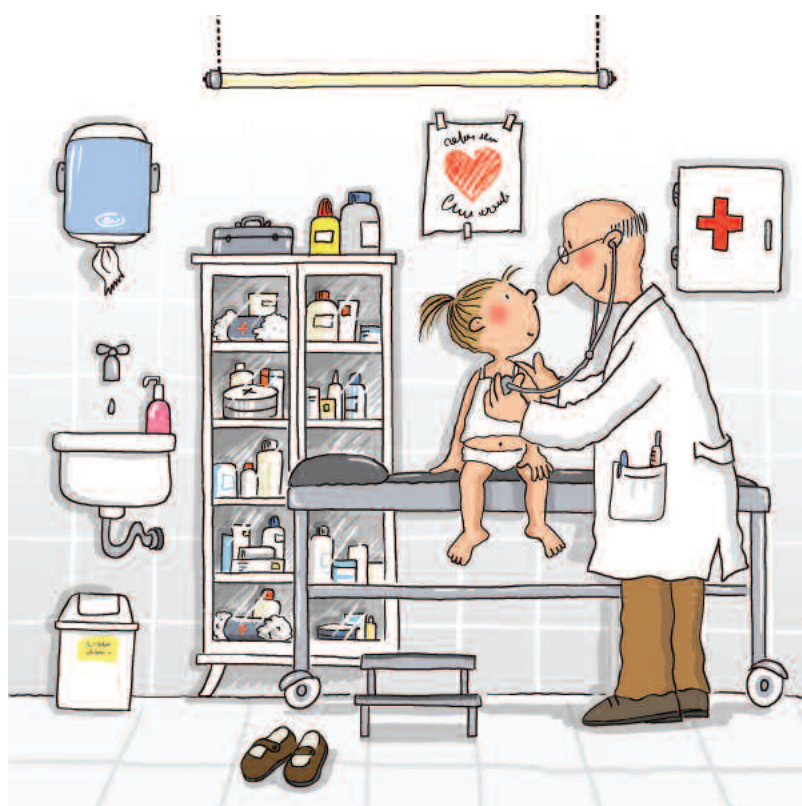
A few months ago I was very sick, but now I'm feeling a lot better.

Do you want to know what HIV is?



It is possible that someone has HIV and doesn't even know it. It is possible that you feel good and don't even have one symptom: So then, how can we know? As time goes by, maybe we start to feel a bit sick. Or maybe we find out when we do a special blood test.

And if the doctor says that you have it, you have to take extra care of yourself. You have to take your medicine and follow the doctor's recommendations.



Did you know that the HIV virus can get into your body in three different ways?  
Let me explain it by using an example: Maria and Joan. (Maria has HIV and Juan does not).

- What would happen if Maria's blood gets mixed with Juan's blood?  
The answer is that Joan would get infected by the HIV virus.
- What would happen if Maria and Juan love each other and have sex without a condom?. Then Juan might get infected by the HIV virus too.
- What would happen if Maria decided to have a baby? Could the baby get infected too?.

Maybe, but the good news is that if we are careful, it is possible to avoid any infection! Know how:

- Avoid having any direct blood contact.
- Using condoms during sexual intercourse.
- Take some medicine during the pregnancy and during the birth. Also, after the birth the baby will need to take medicine for the first few months and drink baby formula (not breast milk!).



Do you think it is possible to know if someone is infected with HIV by the way he or she looks? NO! absolutely not!.The only way to know is by doing a special blood test.

- 12 For example, my parents are not sure when they got infected with HIV. They think that maybe before they got married, they might have had sexual relations with other people without using a condom and one of them got it (as could happen to Maria and Joan!).



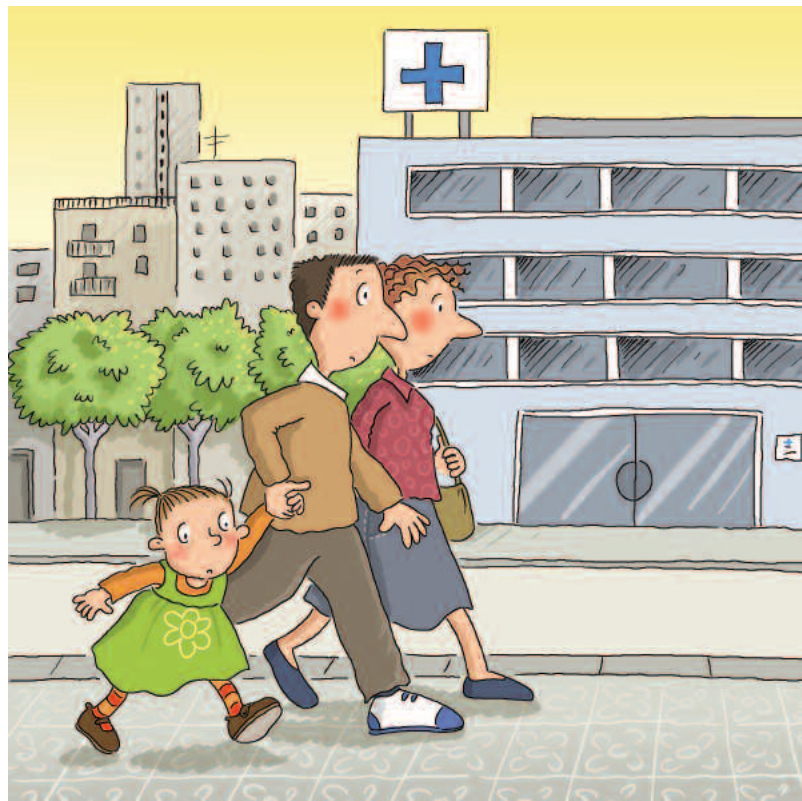


Do you remember Àlex, my brother? My parents were HIV-positive (but didn't know it yet) and mom gave birth to a strong baby who doesn't have the virus. You see, there are babies who do not become infected with HIV!



The difference between Àlex and me is that when I was born my parents didn't know they were infected, so they didn't have any medicine. So when I was a little baby I started to get sick, and because of that they realised that I was infected with HIV and the only way I got it was through my mom during the pregnancy... So she was infected, and my dad too.

We were pretty busy because we had to go to the hospital a lot.

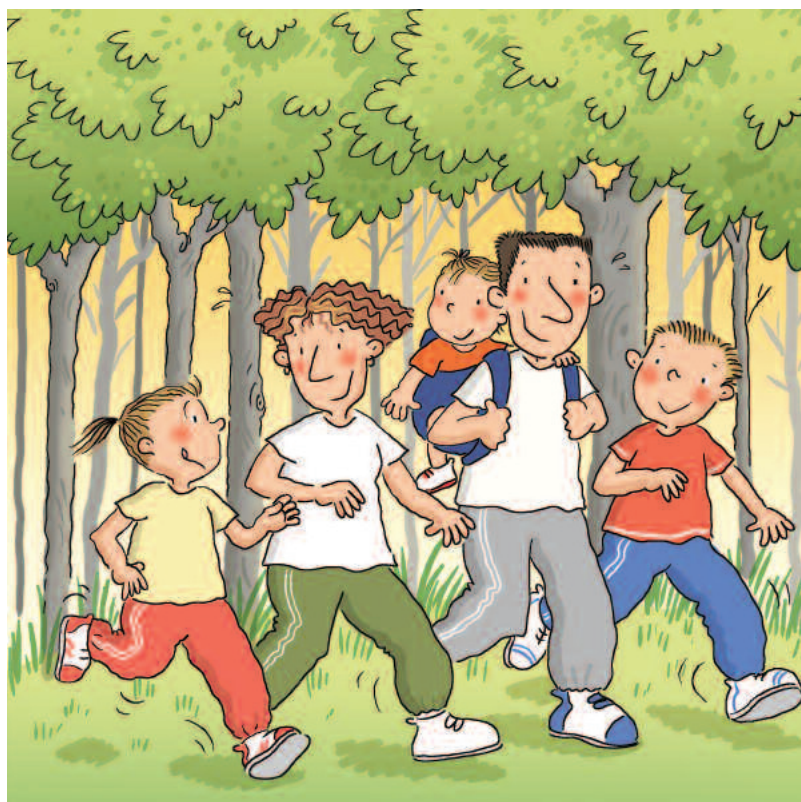


Since we found out, we have started to take extra care of ourselves. Now we eat healthy food, sleep well, visit our doctor periodically and take our medicine daily.

A few years after they found out they were infected, they decided to have another baby. So with some medical help my little sister Clara was born.



Now we know that we have to be careful of more things than other people do, but we live happily like any other family.





### ACTIVITIES

- 1 Draw your family. Write your family history (how your parents met each other, how many brothers and sisters you have, and so on).
- 2 Write about something that makes your whole family happy, then about something that makes you worried and something else that makes you sad.
- 3 Find a photograph of five or six people in a magazine, and try to figure out if some of them are HIV-positive. Do you think is possible to know by the way they look? Why or why not?
- 4 Is there in anyone in your family who has a disease that makes him or her be extra careful? If you like, you may explain.
- 5 Read the following:  
WE ALL ARE SIMILAR / WE ALL ARE DIFFERENT  
Think about three reasons why each statement is true and explain.
- 6 Make a list of five things you think you need when you feel sick.
- 7 Imagine you are in the same classroom with Lucía. Write a letter to her, and explain how you feel after reading this story.

### 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 Lucía 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: 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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