We Are Family

Elizabeth Marté found in her loved ones the support she needed to weather an HIV diagnosis. Now she speaks out about the virus.

December 1, 2007 By Christina Padrés

“They dropped a bomb on me by phone”
I was diagnosed HIV positive in 1993. They told me on the phone and the world came tumbling down on me. Twenty minutes later, my 14-year-old son got home from school. He was the first person I told. That same day he’d had a special lesson about AIDS at school, so he understood the situation better. I told my two other children when they were a little older; when my daughter found out, she told me she loved me no matter what.

“My family didn’t know HIV”
That same day, I called my family in New York City. My mom and one of my sisters traveled to California to be with me. But my other sister asked me how I could have done this to them. Now she has better information and today she accepts and loves me as she did before.

“Now it’s my turn”
I became an activist. I speak at schools, and I’ve participated in various documentaries. It’s really important for me to share my story, but above all, it’s imperative to inform people about protection against the virus. I never imagined that I’d be here 14 years later, in perfect health and enjoying my family.

THREE HIV MYTHS

Myth: HIV can be transmitted by kissing, hugging or from toilet seats.
Fact: The virus is transmitted through vaginal or anal sex without condoms, sharing needles, or when a mother with HIV gives birth or breastfeeds. With treatment, the chance of transmitting HIV to a baby during childbirth is only one percent.

Myth: Only gay men, prostitutes and drug users can get infected with HIV.
Fact: Anyone can be infected. It is impossible to tell someone’s HIV status by looking.

Myth: Being HIV positive is the same as having AIDS.
Fact: A person can have HIV but be healthy. AIDS is diagnosed when a person with HIV has less

than 200 T cells and becomes vulnerable to opportunistic infections.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.tusaludmag.com/article/family