

Daily Reports

Daily Health Policy Report

Daily HIV/AIDS Report

Weekly Health Disparities Report

First Edition

Editorial Policies

Email Alert Sign-Up

Search All Daily Reports Archives

e.g. Prescription Drugs

[Site Search](#)

Daily Reports

THE COMPREHENSIVE SOURCE

Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report

Global Challenges | Food Shortages in Lesotho Affecting HIV-Positive People

[Feb 05, 2009]

IRIN/PlusNews on Tuesday examined the effect of Lesotho's food crisis on HIV-positive people in the country, many of whom are unable to obtain nutritious food. According to *IRIN/PlusNews*, Lesotho's food production has suffered in recent years from erratic weather, soil erosion and the burden of HIV/AIDS on the subsistence farming system. HIV-positive people need to consume 10% to 30% more calories than HIV-negative people, and people who take antiretroviral drugs on an empty stomach can feel sicker. In addition, the effectiveness of the medicine can be reduced without proper nutrition, *IRIN/PlusNews* reports.

Matsepiso Lemphane, a nurse clinician at Liphiring Health Center, estimated that 80% of people with HIV at the clinic do not have enough food. A 2008 survey conducted in Lesotho's urban areas by the [World Food Program](#) found that 30.2% of urban households in Mohale's Hoek were highly food insecure. The survey also said that HIV negatively affects household food security. Lemphane said her biggest concern is HIV-positive women who breastfeed but do not get enough to eat and struggle to produce enough milk to breastfeed exclusively. She said, "We want them to breastfeed exclusively for six months and then wean (the baby), but there's no formula or food to give them, so the mother carries on trying to breastfeed."

A WFP food support program -- run in partnership with the [Ministry of Health](#) -- provides about 8,500 HIV-positive people taking antiretrovirals and their families with food support in six of Lesotho's 10 districts. The three districts with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence and the three most remote rural districts were chosen because of "limited resources," according to Prabhakar Addala, head of program and logistics for WFP in Lesotho. She said that WFP is "trying to get additional funds to cover" districts currently not included in the program, "but we haven't been able to so far." The program is offered to only the poorest households and the assistance lasts nine months, after which WFP food parcels are supposed to be replaced with Livelihood Recovery Projects that help participants and their families generate incomes. The projects -- sponsored by partner organizations like [World Vision](#) and the [Lesotho Red Cross](#) -- are not yet fully functioning, and there have been many "complaints about what happens after the nine months when the food aid ends, because that household will still be food insecure," according to Esther Aceng, country HIV officer for the [World Health Organization](#).

The country currently imports 70% of its food from surrounding South Africa, where many go to work and send money home. This migrant labor system likely

has contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Lesotho because of the long periods of separation between partners, *IRIN/PlusNews* reports (*IRIN/PlusNews*, 2/3).

.....
.....
.....

[About Us](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Help](#) [Site Map](#)



Kaisernetwork.org is a free service of the [Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation](#).