



Get tested for HIV. For you and baby.™

Glossary

AIDS: Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is caused by infection with the human immunodeficiency virus. Having AIDS increases the risk of getting certain infections and cancers.

HIV: Human immunodeficiency virus. This virus weakens the immune system. Some people develop AIDS as a result of their HIV infection.

Immune system: This is the body's defense system against infection and disease. It is made up of a number of organs and cells.

**Get tested for HIV
before your baby is born.
Even if a mother has HIV,
her baby doesn't have to.**

TO LEARN MORE

If you would like to learn more about HIV testing, visit the National HIV Testing Resources Web site at <http://www.hivtest.org>.

You also can contact CDC-INFO by e-mail at cdcinfo@cdc.gov or by phone at **1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)** in English, en Español, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The number for callers with TTY equipment is **1-888-232-6348**.

Your call is free and private.



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Getting a new life off to a great start

You just found out that you're having a baby. It's an exciting time, full of hope and joy. You want to take good care of yourself—and do everything you can to protect the new life growing inside of you. These days, that includes getting tested for HIV as early as possible in your pregnancy.

What is HIV? How does it spread?

HIV is the human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS. HIV weakens the immune system, which is the body's defense against disease.

HIV spreads through body fluids such as blood, semen, and vaginal fluid. It can be passed by having sex without a condom or by sharing needles with a person with HIV. And most important for you to know now, HIV can also be passed from a mother with the virus to her baby.

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Why is HIV testing so important for pregnant women?

Important reasons to know if you have HIV:

- A woman can pass HIV to her baby during pregnancy, during labor, or through breastfeeding.
- If a pregnant woman's infection is found before she gives birth, doctors can treat her with drugs that fight HIV. These drugs can greatly reduce the risk of her baby being infected with HIV.

Women with HIV who start treatment early and maintain it throughout their pregnancy very rarely pass HIV to their babies.

How is the HIV test done?

Nearly all pregnant women today get an HIV test as part of their prenatal care. Usually blood is drawn to test for HIV. Blood can be drawn for other prenatal tests at the same time. It takes a few weeks to get the results unless a rapid test is given.

Today, women with HIV who get treatment are living longer and staying healthier.

What can a pregnant woman with HIV do to protect her health and her baby?

If a pregnant woman has HIV, she can take action to protect her health and her baby. Drugs are now available that can improve the woman's health, prolong her life, and help prevent her baby from getting HIV.

A woman with HIV may have surgery (cesarean or "C" section) to help protect her baby from the disease. A doctor or nurse can talk with her about this option.

It's important to remember that HIV can pass through breast milk. So if a woman has HIV, she should not breastfeed.

Out of 50 pregnant women with HIV, the risk of passing HIV to their babies is about:

- When women begin treatment during pregnancy

 (1 baby out of 50)

- When women begin treatment during labor, or their babies get treatment soon after birth, or they both get treatment at these times

     (5 babies out of 50)

- When women do not get treatment

       
    (13 babies out of 50)