

# Pregnancy and HIV

If you are pregnant or plan to be pregnant, HIV testing is recommended. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the infection spread by contact with body fluids or shared needles of another person with HIV.

Body fluids are blood, urine, stool, vomit, semen, and vaginal secretions.

HIV causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS is a disease that weakens the body's immune system and makes it hard for your body to fight infection.

There is no vaccine to prevent HIV and no cure for AIDS. There are newer medicines available that can lower the chance of getting HIV for people at risk of being exposed to HIV or may have been exposed.

## HIV Testing During Pregnancy

HIV testing is recommended for all pregnant women in the early months of pregnancy. A blood test is often done and test results will be shared with you by your doctor or health care provider.

- A **negative test result means you do not have HIV.**
- A **positive test result means you have HIV** and you need follow up care from your doctor.

HIV tests do not tell you if you have AIDS. HIV tests may be repeated during pregnancy.

## HIV Treatment for You

**Many mothers with HIV can have a safe pregnancy when they are treated for the virus.**

If you have HIV, there are medicines to protect your health and reduce the chance of the infection in your baby. If you are not already on a treatment before pregnancy, medicines may be started after the first trimester. Treatment will depend on:

- The amount of virus in your body
- How well your immune system is able to fight infection
- Other health problems you may have

## Preventing Infection in Your Baby

### At Delivery

You may have a cesarean delivery instead of a vaginal delivery. Cesarean delivery may reduce the chance of HIV infection in your baby. The surgery may be planned a week or more before your delivery date. Talk with your doctor about your delivery.

## **After Your Baby is Born**

If you have HIV, your doctor may recommend that your baby:

- Start medicine the day of delivery to protect him or her against the chance of HIV infection. This may continue for several weeks.
- Have treatment if his or her red blood cells are low, called anemia. Treatment for anemia increases red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of the body.
- Be tested for HIV several times during the first year. If a baby tests positive after birth, it does not mean the baby has HIV. A mother's antibodies for the virus can show up in a baby's blood test for the first 6 months of life.
- Be bottle fed with an iron rich baby formula. Breast milk is a body fluid that can carry HIV virus, so you should not breastfeed.

**Talk to your doctor or health provider if you have questions or concerns.**