



Pregnancy and me

Women and HIV: A series of factsheets for women about HIV



Testing for HIV

Thinking about babies?

HIV does not take away your desire or your right to have children. Advances in HIV treatments make this possible. The risk of having an HIV positive baby is extremely low.



Recently Diagnosed

Planned pregnancy

If you are thinking of having a baby, talk to your HIV doctor about it. Your doctor will be able to advise you on:



Treatments: The basics

- The best time to get pregnant, (both in relation to your HIV and your menstrual cycle)
- Safer options for your partner if he is HIV negative (such as self-insemination)
- How to reduce the risk of passing on HIV to your baby
- The best HIV treatment for you and your baby (a few HIV medications are not safe to be taken during pregnancy).



Looking after yourself



NSW Services & Websites

If you have a regular partner, it is good to talk about your options together, so you can make decisions that you are both comfortable with.

Unplanned pregnancy

If you have become pregnant unexpectedly or if you were diagnosed with HIV during pregnancy, it is important that you talk to your doctor as soon as possible. There are options to prevent HIV being passed on to your baby at all stages of pregnancy.

Make sure you understand the advice you are given before you decide. You can take your partner, a friend or a support worker with you when you go to the doctor.

Reducing the risk of passing on HIV to your baby

There are four steps that are recommended:

- Taking HIV treatments during pregnancy
- Not breastfeeding
- HIV medications for your baby
- Considering a caesarean delivery.

There are standard and safe treatments for pregnancy. Your doctor will discuss these steps in detail with you.

Medicines for newborns

Your baby will be given HIV medications from birth for up to six weeks. The medications are in syrup form. The doctor will talk to you if your baby needs any extra medications.

When will I know if my baby is HIV positive or negative?

Your baby will be tested regularly for the virus for the first six months. Babies are considered HIV negative at three months of age if all of the tests have been negative and the baby has not been breastfed. Testing continues until your baby is about 18 months old as a precaution.

Hospitals

All NSW hospitals should have up-to-date information on antenatal care and delivery for women who are HIV positive. The level of experience, however, might vary from hospital to hospital.

The Royal Hospital for Women and the Sydney Children's Hospital have a lot of experience in antenatal care and delivery for women who are HIV positive in NSW. You can talk to them to get advice about the services in your area. They can give you support and information regardless of where you choose to deliver your baby.

Support

Pregnancy and motherhood can be a challenging time as well as a fulfilling one.

Having a group of people who can help can make things a little easier. Talk to friends, family or a support worker to see what help you can get. You may also want to talk to other positive women about their experience.

Services

Also see NSW Services and Websites factsheet

The Heterosexual HIV/AIDS Service (Pozhet) Freecall: 1800 812 404

ACON Women & Families Affected by HIV Project Ph: (02) 9699 8756

Multicultural HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C Service Ph: (02) 9515 5030

Paediatric HIV Service, Sydney Children's Hospital Ph: (02) 9382 1851

If you need an interpreter call 131 450

Further reading: follow the links or ask a support worker for a copy of these resources

Positive pregnancy

Sydney Children's Hospital

http://www.sch.edu.au/departments/hiv/positive_pregnancy_booklet.pdf

Treat yourself right

http://www.afao.org.au/library_docs/resources/TYR_07.pdf

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