



# HIV and Pregnancy

A pregnant mother who may have HIV needs to take precautions in preparation for the arrival of her newborn. She will need to think of her own health and the health of her child. Not all infected women will pass HIV to their child. Only 1 in 4 (25%) of pregnant women with HIV will transmit the virus to their newborn. However, there are some things you can do to decrease the risk of transmission. Today's treatment can lower the passing of HIV to your child to a rate as low as 1 in 100.

- **GET TESTED!** Between 30,000 and 40,000 women in the US are infected with HIV and don't know it. Knowing your HIV status is crucial in preventing transmission to your offspring.
- Consult your doctor and use antiretroviral (ARV) medications. The risk of transmitting the virus is extremely low if ARVs are used.
- During delivery, keep labor time short. The longer you are in labor, the greater the risk of transmission.
- Delivering your baby via caesarean (C-) section will further decrease the risk of transmission of the virus.
- Finally, do not breastfeed your newborn. Up to 14% of infants contract HIV via breast milk.

A pregnant mother can engage in different treatment programs. In fact, it is strongly recommended that you maintain or seek treatment as soon as a positive result is identified while pregnant. However, only you and your doctor can identify an appropriate plan of action. Be sure to discuss all options with your doctor.



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