

Cytomegalovirus and Pregnancy

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

What do I need to know about cytomegalovirus during pregnancy?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a virus that affects both adults and children. Most healthy people do not have symptoms and recover without knowing they are infected. It is important to know that if you are infected during pregnancy, CMV can infect and harm your unborn baby.

What are the risks of CMV to my unborn baby? CMV can affect your unborn baby's nervous system. CMV may lead to hearing loss, vision loss, or delays in your child's development and learning. CMV also increases your unborn baby's risk for epilepsy and cerebral palsy.

How does CMV spread? CMV spreads through contact with body fluids, such as saliva, urine, tears, or semen of an infected person. Pregnant women are most often exposed to the virus from young children, especially if the children are in daycare. Women may also come in contact with CMV through sexual contact. CMV can be spread for months to years after someone is infected. Over time, it becomes dormant (inactive) and cannot be spread. In some cases, hormone changes during pregnancy or breastfeeding may cause the virus to become active again. CMV may also become active again when a person's immune system becomes weak, such as with an HIV infection or an organ or bone marrow transplant.

How can I avoid getting a CMV infection?

- **Wash your hands often.** This will help prevent you from getting CMV. Wash your hands after you feed a child, wipe his face, handle toys, or change a diaper.



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- **Clean items that may be infected.** Use chlorine-based disinfectants to clean toys, surfaces, toilets, and shared items in your home.
- **Avoid contact with body fluids.** Do not share food, drinks, or utensils with a

child. Wash silverware, and dishes with soap and water. Avoid contact with saliva or nasal drainage when you kiss or care for a child.

How is CMV diagnosed and treated during pregnancy? Healthcare providers may test your blood to find if you have CMV. They may also test amniotic fluid to find if your unborn baby has CMV. You may need to take medicines to support your immune system or treat a viral infection. The medicine may also help prevent your unborn baby from getting CMV.

When should I contact my healthcare provider?

- You think you came in contact with someone infected with CMV.
- You have a fever, sore throat, swollen glands, or a rash.
- You have questions or concerns about your condition or care.

CARE AGREEMENT:

You have the right to help plan your care. Learn about your health condition and how it may be treated. Discuss treatment options with your caregivers to decide what care you want to receive. You always have the right to refuse treatment.

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