

## *What tests are recommended for pregnant women?*

Doctors recommend certain blood tests for pregnant women to check for infections and other conditions. If problems are found, treatment can often reduce the risk of harm to you and your unborn child.

HIV testing looks for antibodies to the virus that causes AIDS. It's just one of the tests that doctors strongly advise all pregnant women get to protect their health and the health of their babies. You can choose to refuse a test for HIV and still get prenatal care. However, you can be at risk or be infected with HIV and not know it unless you are tested.

### **Recommended blood tests include:**

- Blood type and Rh Factor
- HIV (AIDS)
- Rubella (German measles)
- Syphilis
- Hepatitis B
- Diabetes

*For more information, call the  
State HIV Hotline toll-free  
1-800-272-2437*



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For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-272-2437.

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# PRENATAL TESTING *for* HIV

*What you should know*

*HIV is  
Human Immunodeficiency Virus,  
the virus that causes AIDS.*

### **What if I have HIV and I'm pregnant?**

Sometimes women who do not think they are at risk for HIV find out that they are infected when a test is done during pregnancy. It is a shock to get this news, but it gives women who are infected with HIV a chance to get treatment and take steps to protect the baby.

If you have HIV infection, you can take medication to treat the virus. Treatment may keep you healthier, and will greatly reduce your chances of passing the virus to your baby during pregnancy and birth.

**Treatment during pregnancy protects your baby.** HIV can be passed to a baby during pregnancy, at the time of delivery, and through breastfeeding. For women who get treatment for HIV while they are pregnant, there is almost no chance they will give HIV to their babies. Without treatment, one in four babies are infected.

Your doctor will also advise you not to breastfeed, because breast milk can pass the virus to your baby. The goal of treatment is to keep you and your baby healthy.

Public funds are available to women with low incomes to help cover the cost of HIV care and treatment.



### **How does someone get HIV?**

HIV is transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk. You could get HIV at any time if you have sex or share needles with someone who has it. You may not even know you're infected.



### **What happens when I get an HIV test?**

A small amount of blood is taken from your arm. This blood is used for all the recommended tests. Your doctor will have the test results by the time of your next visit.

### **What if the test is negative?**

The HIV test looks for antibodies which your body produces when you are infected with HIV. It takes between two weeks to three months after exposure to HIV to show on a test if you have been infected. If your HIV test is negative, it probably means that you are not infected. However, if you were recently infected and your body hasn't made antibodies to HIV yet, you may need to be tested again. Your doctor can advise you whether you need to get another test later in your pregnancy.

### **Confidentiality and HIV Tests**

The medical tests for HIV are confidential. This means only you and your health care provider know. If you test positive for HIV, it must also be reported confidentially to the health department. This is done for most communicable diseases. These reports are kept strictly confidential, and are used to understand how the disease is spreading.

You may choose to get an anonymous test for HIV at a local health department. This means you do not give your name, and your name cannot be reported to the health department. But if the test shows you are HIV positive, the anonymous test cannot be used to get treatment for you and your baby. Your health care provider will need to confidentially report your positive test results when you seek treatment.

All local health departments are required to make sure that anonymous testing is available. To find out about anonymous testing in your area, call the HIV Hotline at **1-800-272-2437**.



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