

One Test. Two Lives.

HIV Testing for BABY & ME



Physician's Stamp

Iowa Department of Public Health
Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis

Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
515-281-6801
www.idph.iowa.gov

Off to a Great Start!

You just found out that you're having a baby. You want to take good care of yourself--and do everything you can to protect the life growing inside of you. Part of your preparation includes getting tested for HIV as early as possible in your pregnancy.

What is HIV?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. Over time, most people infected with HIV become less able to fight off life-threatening infections and cancers. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is the late stage of HIV disease.

HIV spreads through blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. It can be passed by having sex without a condom or by sharing needles with a person with HIV. And most important for you to know now, HIV can also be passed from a mother who has the virus to her baby.

Why is HIV Testing Important for Pregnant Women?

A woman can pass HIV to her baby during pregnancy, during labor, or through breastfeeding. If her infection is found before she gives birth, however, doctors can treat her with drugs that fight HIV. These drugs can greatly reduce the risk of her baby being infected with HIV.

How is the HIV Test Done?

More than likely you will be tested for HIV as part of your prenatal care. Usually blood is drawn for HIV and other prenatal tests at the same time. Testing might be repeated later in pregnancy or at birth.

Even if You Have HIV, Your Baby Doesn't Have to

Not only can today's medications be used to help you if you have HIV, but they can also prevent the virus from being passed to your baby before or during birth.

It is important to remember that HIV can also be passed through breast milk. So if you have HIV, you should not breastfeed.

Improving Baby's Chances

Treatment begun during pregnancy can reduce a mother's chance of passing HIV to her baby to about

1 in 50 

If treatment is delayed until labor or after birth, the baby's chance of having HIV is

 5 in 50 

Without treatment, the chance of the baby having HIV is

13 in 50

