

Are You Thinking About Getting Pregnant? Think About Pre-Conception Care

Be as Healthy as You Can Be

Women of childbearing age should know that their own health is important before and during pregnancy. If you are HIV-positive, it is still possible to give birth to a healthy child. Being as healthy as you can be before becoming pregnant can help you have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. Routine steps you can take to improve and maintain your health before you become pregnant include:

- Take folic acid supplements (vitamin B9)
- Quit smoking
- Get regular exercise
- Avoid all alcohol and drugs
- Eat healthy and balanced meals
- Get regular health care

What Should I Know About HIV?

- Get an HIV Test! In New York State, everyone between the ages of 13-64 who is receiving primary or emergency health care must be offered a test. Be sure to “Say Yes” to the test. It is important to know if you are HIV-positive before you get pregnant. Two out of every 1000 pregnant women in New York State are HIV-positive. Since HIV can be passed from you to your unborn child, knowing your HIV status will affect the decisions you make about pregnancy and your health care before and during pregnancy.
- Today, there are HIV medications to reduce the risk of passing HIV from an infected mother to her baby. Without these medications, one out of every four HIV-positive women will pass the virus to her baby before it is born. With these medications, only 1-2 out of 100 women will pass the virus to her baby. Every woman thinking about becoming pregnant —and women who are already pregnant — should be tested for HIV.
- Know your partner’s HIV status. If one of you is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative, this may affect the decisions and steps you take to become pregnant.

What If I Am HIV Positive?

- If you are HIV-positive, you can still have a healthy pregnancy and deliver a healthy baby. There are steps you can take to ensure that you are as healthy as you can be.
- Talk to your health care providers about starting treatment to prevent passing the virus to the baby. If you are already on treatment, talk to your providers to make sure you are on the best medications for you and your baby. Keep your HIV viral load (the amount of virus in your body) as low as possible and your CD4 cell count (cells that fight infection) as high as possible. Your HIV viral load and your CD4 cell count will be carefully watched throughout the pregnancy.
- Your medical provider will want to test you to see if you have other infections because your immune system may be weakened. Your providers may test you for other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Talk openly to your obstetrician-gynecologist (ob-gyn) or midwife about having HIV. They can help determine if you need any special care.

What Happens Once I Become Pregnant?

- It is very important to see a medical provider for prenatal care.
- Keep living as healthy a lifestyle as possible. More than ever, it is important to quit smoking, avoid alcohol and drugs, and eat well.
- If you are HIV-positive, your medical provider will prescribe medications to treat your HIV and reduce the chance of passing the virus to your baby.
- Make sure your pregnancy health care provider and your HIV health care provider communicate so they can agree on the best treatment for you.

Remember, Maintaining Your Health Is Important for Both of You!

For More Information on HIV and Pregnancy:

New York State Department of Health website and HIV/AIDS hotline

<http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/publications/>

English: 1-800-541-AIDS

Spanish: 1-800-233-SIDA

TDD: 1-800-369-2437

Voice callers can use the New York Relay System:

Call 711 or 1-800-421-1220 and ask the operator to dial 1-800-541-2437.

New York City HIV/AIDS hotline and website:

1-800-TALK-HIV (1-800-825-5448); www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/.

Planned Parenthood of New York City

1-800-230-PLAN (7516)

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/nyc/>

American Pregnancy Association

<http://www.americanpregnancy.org/pregnancycomplications/hiv aids.html>

New York State Department of Health Growing Up Healthy Hotline

1-800-522-5006

AIDSMEDS

Family Planning, Pregnancy, and HIV

http://www.aidsmeds.com/articles/Pregnancy_4903.shtml

HIV and Pregnancy fact sheets

http://aidsinfonet.org/fact_sheets/view/1000