Hepatitis C & Pregnant Women

Did You Know...

- **If you have hepatitis C (Hep C) and are pregnant, Hep C may be passed to your baby during pregnancy or during childbirth.**
- **Mother-to-baby transmission is the leading cause of Hep C in children.**
- **If you don't know your Hep C status, you should ask your healthcare provider about getting tested.**
- **Hep C is not spread by kissing, hugging or casual contact. Hep C is spread through contact with infected blood.**
- **The only way to know if a baby has Hep C is a blood test.**
- **After a woman delivers her baby, she can take medicine to cure her Hep C.**

If you are pregnant and unaware of your Hep C status, ask your healthcare provider about getting tested. Unlike other viruses, Hep C is not a regular screening test for pregnant women. If you don't know your Hep C status, have never been tested for Hep C, and have risk factors, you should request testing.

Risk factors include using injection drugs before ***or*** during pregnancy, having HIV co-infection, getting a tattoo or piercing outside of a regulated body art facility (at a party or friend's house), ever being in jail, receiving blood or blood products before 1992, and having an accidental needle stick. If you said "yes" to any of these risk factors, talk with your healthcare provider about getting tested for Hep C.

Women with Hep C can have a vaginal delivery or a C-section. C-section or other types of delivery have not been found to prevent Hep C transmission.

NJ Health New Jersey Department of Health
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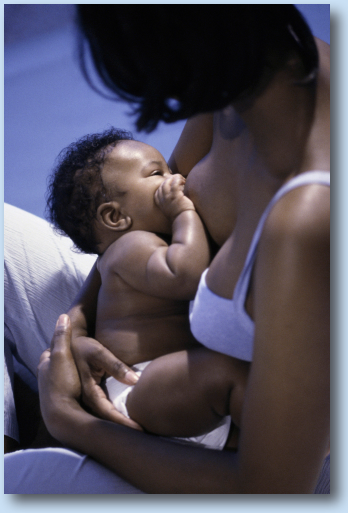
Hepatitis C and New Mothers

If you are a new mom with Hep C: New mothers can breastfeed if they have Hep C. Hep C is not found in breastmilk. However, moms with Hep C should not breastfeed if their nipples are cracked or bleeding. Be sure to stay up-to-date with your child's vaccinations. Most babies with Hep C show little or no signs of being sick. A blood test is the only way to know if a baby has Hep C.There is no vaccine to prevent Hep C. Talk to your healthcare provider. Make sure that they know that you have Hep C if you tested positive for the virus. There is medicine you can take after you deliver to cure Hep C.

For children, knowing their status is the best way to seek care for them, so make sure they get tested for Hep C too. There is currently no way to prevent mothers from passing Hep C to their children, but there are ways for you and your child to protect your health and the health of your loved ones.



When should a child be tested for Hep C?

Either	
After 18 months	Test for hepatitis C Antibody – if the test is positive, follow up with hepatitis C RNA (viral load) confirmatory test
After 2 months	Test for hepatitis C RNA confirmatory test, and again after 12 months
After 12 months	Test one more time for hepatitis C RNA confirmatory test

Testing for hepatitis C antibodies, if the baby is less than 18 months old is not recommended. The antibodies may be maternal antibodies passed down by the mother.

Where can I get more information about Hep C?

www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/hepatitisc.shtml

https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/index.h

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