

QUESTIONS ABOUT HIV, STDs, AND PREGNANCY

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Visit knowmystatus.org or call 2-1-1 to find a clinic in your area to get tested.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

For HIV/STD questions, call
737-255-4300

or visit
dshs.texas.gov/hivstd

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DO I NEED TO GET TESTED FOR HIV AND SYPHILIS IF I AM PREGNANT?

Pregnant women should get tested for HIV at their first prenatal visit and during the third trimester. Some pregnant women and their newborns may also need an HIV test when the baby is born. Pregnant women should also get tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit, during their third trimester, and at delivery.

Over 9,000 women of child-bearing age in Texas live with HIV. About one in six people living with HIV in Texas do not know they have it. Even if you do not think you are at risk for HIV, it is best to know your HIV status for your health and your baby's health. You should also encourage your partner to get tested for HIV.

Without treatment, syphilis can cause major problems for the baby during pregnancy and at birth, including miscarriage, stillbirth, blindness, deafness, brain damage, and even death. If caught early, syphilis is treatable before any of this happens. More than 900 babies contracted syphilis in Texas in 2023.

It is also a good idea to get tested for gonorrhea and chlamydia at your first prenatal visit. These STDs can also cause problems during pregnancy and delivery.

HOW DO STDs GET FROM THE MOTHER TO THE BABY?

A mother living with HIV or other STDs can pass it to her baby anytime during pregnancy, birth, and, in some cases, breastfeeding.

IF I AM LIVING WITH HIV, WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY BABY?

The risk of passing HIV to your baby can be one percent or less if you:

- See your doctor regularly and take your HIV medicine as prescribed throughout pregnancy and birth.
- Give HIV medicine to your baby for four to six weeks after giving birth.

If you have HIV, you should talk to your doctor before breastfeeding a baby. Do not pre-chew food for a baby.

You should start prenatal care as soon as you think you might be pregnant, you should go to the doctor. Starting care early and getting frequent checkups will help you and your baby stay healthy. If the cost of care concerns you or you need to find a doctor, call 2-1-1 or go to yourtexasbenefits.com for help finding prenatal care.



IF I AM LIVING WITH HIV, WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY HEALTH?

Treatment helps you stay healthy, live longer, and reduces the amount of virus in your body. Having a low amount of virus reduces the risk of you passing HIV to others.

HIV and other STDs are mainly spread by having sex or sharing syringes and other injection equipment. There are many things you can do to protect yourself. Be honest with your healthcare provider about your sex life and substance use; they can help you understand your prevention options. If you have sex, get tested for HIV and other STDs. The only way to know for sure if you have HIV or other STDs is to get tested. Ask your sex partners to get tested, too.

- See a doctor right away if you have an unusual discharge or notice any rashes, sores, or bumps on your body. If you think you have been at risk for HIV or any other STD, get tested.
- If you have an STD, make sure both you and your partner finish treatment before having sex again.

