

10 QUESTIONS ABOUT HIV, SYPHILIS, AND PREGNANCY



10. WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO STAY HEALTHY?

- 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 at a doctor's office or STD clinic. 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 a test.
- If you have an STD, make sure both you and your partner finish treatment before having sex again.

Take care of each other. Share this information with women you know.

Where can I learn more?

In Texas, call 2-1-1 toll-free to find HIV/STD testing, treatment, and prenatal care near you.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

For HIV/STD questions, call
800-CDC-INFO (English/Español)
888-232-6348 (TTY) or 7-1-1

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1. DO I NEED TO GET TESTED FOR HIV IF I AM PREGNANT?

Yes. 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.

2. WHY ARE PREGNANT WOMEN TESTED?

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.

3. HOW DOES HIV GET FROM THE MOTHER TO THE BABY?

A mother living with HIV can pass it to her baby anytime during pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding.

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

The risk of passing HIV to your baby can be 1% 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 4-6 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.

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

Treatment helps people living with HIV stay healthy and live long lives. Staying on treatment also reduces the risk of passing HIV to others.

6. SHOULD I TEST FOR SYPHILIS AND OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES(STDs)?

Yes. All pregnant women should test for syphilis at their first prenatal visit, during their third trimester, and at delivery.

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.

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.

7. WHEN SHOULD I 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.

8. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PRENATAL CARE?

Prenatal care allows your doctor to check the progress of your pregnancy and look for problems. Finding problems early will help your doctor treat you to protect you and your baby.

9. WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE MY CHANCES OF GETTING HIV OR OTHER STDs?

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. Picking the right way for you depends on your level of personal risk. Be honest with your healthcare provider about your sex life and substance use; they can help you understand your prevention options. The online risk reduction tool at www.cdc.gov/hivrisk/ can help you learn more about these options.