

Is there a test for CMV?

A blood test can be done to see if a woman already had a CMV infection. More invasive tests, such as amniocentesis, can help find out if your unborn baby is infected. However, these tests are not perfect. Consult your doctor about CMV testing if you are concerned that you became infected with CMV during pregnancy.

Good hygiene by pregnant women is still the best way to protect unborn babies against CMV infection.

What else should you know about CMV?

Most children and adults infected with CMV have no symptoms and may not even know that they have been infected. Others may develop a mild illness. Symptoms may include fever, sore throat, fatigue, and swollen glands.

Is there a treatment for CMV?

For pregnant women whose fetus might be infected with CMV there is no treatment. For infants born with severe symptoms the drug ganciclovir is sometimes used.

Consult with your child's doctor about this treatment.

Vaccines for preventing CMV infection are still in the research and development stage.



Definitions:

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) – a common virus that can cause disease in infants whose mothers are infected with CMV during pregnancy

Virus – a very small germ that causes a specific disease

Good Hygiene – washing hands, avoiding oral contact with urine and saliva



For more information about CMV, contact:

Division of Viral and Rickettsial Diseases
National Center for Infectious Diseases
Centers for Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE, MS G18
Atlanta, GA 30333

Visit the CDC website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/cmvm>

What Women Should Know About Cytomegalovirus (CMV)



What is cytomegalovirus?

CMV, or cytomegalovirus (sī-to-MEG-a-lō-vi-rus), is a common virus that infects people of all ages. Most infections with CMV are “silent,” meaning most people who are infected with CMV have no signs or symptoms. However, CMV can cause disease in unborn babies and in people with weakened immune systems. Once CMV is in a person’s body, it stays there for life.



CMV under the microscope

How is CMV spread?

- Person-to-person contact (such as kissing, sexual contact, and getting saliva or urine on your hands and then touching your eyes, or the inside of your nose or mouth)
- A pregnant woman can pass the virus to her unborn baby
- Blood transfusions and organ transplantations

CMV is found in body fluids, including urine, saliva (spit), breast milk, blood, tears, semen, and vaginal fluids. A person can become infected with CMV when they come in contact with these body fluids. The chance of getting a CMV infection from casual contact is very small.

Can a pregnant woman pass CMV to her unborn baby?

About one third of women who become infected with CMV for the first time during pregnancy pass the virus to their unborn babies. Women who had CMV before getting pregnant can also pass the virus to their unborn babies, but this is less common. When infections occur in unborn babies, CMV can cause a wide range of disabilities. Each year in the United States, about 1 in 750 children are born with or develop disabilities as a result of CMV infection.

What problems or disabilities does CMV cause in babies?

- Mental disability
- Hearing loss
- Vision loss
- Growth problems
- Lung problems
- Bleeding problems
- Liver problems
- Spleen problems

Symptoms caused by CMV can appear at birth or later in the baby’s life. In some infants, hearing or vision loss occurs months or years after birth. Most babies born with CMV never develop symptoms or disabilities.

Can pregnant women become infected with CMV from children who are in day care?

Pregnant women can become infected with CMV through contact with young children, especially children in day care who are 1 to 2½ years of age. CMV infection is very common in day care settings, but CMV does

not harm the children themselves. Pregnant mothers who have young children in day care or who work in day care centers can help prevent catching CMV by practicing good hygiene (such as hand washing).

How can you prevent catching CMV during pregnancy?

No actions can eliminate all risks of catching CMV, but there are measures that can reduce the spread of CMV:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after contact with saliva or diapers of young children. Wash well for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Do not kiss young children under the age of 6 on the mouth or cheek. Instead, kiss them on the head or give them a big hug.
- Do not share food, drinks, or utensils (spoons or forks) with young children.

If you are pregnant and work in a day care center, reduce your risk of getting CMV by working with children who are older than 2½ years of age, especially if you have never been infected with CMV or are unsure if you have been exposed.

