

Reduce the risk of Cytomegalovirus in pregnancy

What is Cytomegalovirus (CMV)?

CMV is a common virus especially in young children. Up to 70 percent of adults have been infected by age 40. Most healthy people infected with CMV will have mild flu-like symptoms or no symptoms at all. Once infected, the virus stays in the body for life. CMV can be harmful to an unborn baby and is the most common infectious cause of disability in newborns.

What are the symptoms?

Children and adults with healthy immune systems do not usually develop symptoms when infected but may develop an illness similar to glandular fever with tiredness, sore throat, swollen glands and fever. People with a weakened immune system are more likely to develop symptoms.

What is Congenital CMV?

Congenital CMV occurs when a pregnant woman passes the virus to her unborn baby. The highest risk is when a woman is infected for the first time during the first half of her pregnancy. If this happens, there is about a one in three chance of passing CMV to the baby.

CMV affects less than one percent of pregnancies.

What are the risks from CMV?

Most babies with CMV are born healthy.

However, some babies may develop:

- hearing loss
- vision problems
- developmental delay
- cerebral palsy.

In rare cases, CMV can be life-threatening.

Can Congenital CMV be treated?

Women with a primary CMV infection may be offered early antiviral treatments.

Newborns with symptoms may also receive antiviral treatments. Babies without symptoms at birth still need regular follow up, including additional hearing tests.

How is the virus spread?

CMV is transmitted through close contact with infected bodily fluids, including saliva and urine. It is spread through sexual contact and breastfeeding. Spread from pregnant women with infection to their unborn baby.

Higher risk: People who care for, or work with young children, including parents.

Good hygiene reduces your chances of getting CMV



Wash your hands with soapy water after feeding toddlers, wiping a child nose or drool, handling children's toys or changing a nappy.



Do not put a child's dummy in your own mouth.



Do not share eating utensils, drink bottles, food or a toothbrush with a child.



Kiss a child on the head to avoid contact with a child's saliva.



Disinfect toys, counter tops and other surfaces that may have a child's saliva or urine on them.



Please talk to your healthcare provider if you are concerned.

Scan the QR code to learn more about CMV

Last edited July 2026.

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