

Is there a test for CMV?

Lab tests can be done to see if a woman has already had CMV infection. These tests, however, are not very good at predicting whether a baby will have health problems.

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?

No treatment is currently recommended for mothers and infants infected with CMV. Antiviral drug therapy is being tested in infants.

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:

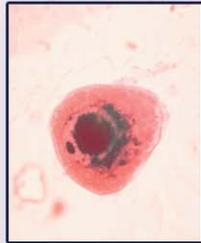
<http://www.cdc.gov/cmV>

What Women Should Know About Cytomegalovirus (CMV)



What is cytomegalovirus?

CMV, or cytomegalovirus (sī-to-MEG-a-lo-vī-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, it 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 infection of cell in urine.

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 nose or mouth)
- A pregnant woman can pass the virus to her unborn baby
- Blood transfusions and organ transplantations

The virus is found in bodily 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 bodily fluids. Since only tiny amounts of the virus are found in these 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 rare. When infections occur in unborn babies, CMV can cause a wide range of disabilities. Each year in the United States, about 1 in 500 children are born with or develop disabilities as a result of CMV infection.

What health problems does CMV cause in babies?

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

CMV can cause symptoms when the baby is born or later in the baby’s life. Most babies born with CMV never develop symptoms or disabilities. In some infants, hearing or vision loss occurs months or years after birth.

Can pregnant women catch CMV from children who are in day care?

Pregnant women can catch CMV through contact with children in day care, especially from children 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 changing diapers. Wash well for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Do not kiss young children under the age of 5 or 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.

