

HIV Facts for WIC Staff

Human immunodeficiency virus is known as HIV. It is the virus that can lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS. In 2008, an estimated 25% of adults and adolescents living with HIV infection were female.

Mother-to-Child HIV Transmission (MCT)

- HIV transmission from mother to child during pregnancy, labor and delivery, or breastfeeding is called perinatal transmission. Perinatal HIV transmission is the most common route of HIV infection in children and is now the source of almost all AIDS cases in children in the United States.
- The chance that MCT during pregnancy can be reduced to 2% or less (fewer than 2 out of every 100) with proper care and medications.
- MCT can occur if HIV-infected women breastfeed. This chance is even higher if an uninfected woman becomes HIV-infected during the time she is breastfeeding.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that HIV infected women do not breastfeed.

- HIV is known to be present in the liquid and cellular components of the human milk of HIV-infected women.
 - Concentrations of HIV are highest in the first weeks of milk production and highest immediately after birth in the colostrum.
 - Virus can be detected at some level for the entire period of milk production.

In the United States, the safest way of feeding infants of HIV-infected mothers is to give replacement feedings, most often by infant formula feeding.

But first, a pregnant woman and her doctor must know if she is infected with HIV.

- 25% of all people infected with HIV do not know their HIV status and many women who are infected with HIV may not know they are infected.
- CDC has recommended routine HIV testing for all pregnant women. If women are tested early in their pregnancy, those who are infected can be given therapy to improve their own health and reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to the baby.
- For more information about HIV prevention, visit www.cdc.gov/hiv/partners/AHP.htm

Resources

Act Against Aids - <http://www.actagainstaids.org/>

Campaign launched by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the White House to combat complacency about HIV and AIDS in the United States.

AIDS.gov - <http://www.aids.gov/>

Works to increase HIV testing and care among people most at-risk for, or living with, HIV, by using emerging communication strategies to provide access to Federal HIV information. Includes social media resources.

HIV Testing and Pregnancy Fact Sheets - http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/contentfiles/HIVTestingandPregnancy_FS_en.pdf

From AIDSinfo, a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Offers access to federally approved HIV/AIDS medical practice guidelines.

HIV and Pregnancy: Frequently Asked Questions - <http://www.acog.org/~media/For%20Patients/faq113.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20120323T1323102895>

From the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

National Perinatal HIV Consultation and Referral Service - Phone: 888-448-8765

Free 24-hour clinical consultation and advice on management of HIV in pregnant women, HIV testing in pregnancy and care of HIV-exposed infants. Provided by the National HIV/AIDS Clinicians' Consultation Center at San Francisco General Hospital.

National Prevention Information Network - <http://www.cdcnpin.org/scripts/hiv/index.asp>

U.S. reference and referral service for information on HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and tuberculosis (TB). Phone: 800-458-5231

One Test. Two Lives. - <http://www.actagainstaids.org/provider/ottl/index.html>

CDC campaign that focuses on ensuring that all women are tested for HIV early in their pregnancy.

Take Charge. Take the Test.™ - <http://hivtest.org/takecharge/>

CDC social marketing campaign developed to encourage African American women to get tested for HIV.