



## HIV Testing in Pregnancy

### Why should you get tested?

Pregnant women who are infected with the HIV virus are HIV positive. They can almost completely eliminate the chance of passing the virus to their baby if they get expert medical care and are given medicines to treat the virus.

Health experts in British Columbia recommend that all pregnant women be tested for the virus. It is recommended that pregnant women get HIV testing at the beginning of each pregnancy. If the expectant mother has had high-risk exposures during the pregnancy, then the test should be repeated during the pregnancy.

HIV testing of pregnant women is not done in many developing countries. Parents or guardians of children born in or adopted from these countries should consider HIV testing for their children.

It is very important for all HIV infected persons to be aware of their diagnosis in order to access care and medicines to manage this disease.

### What are the chances that you are HIV positive?

The chance of a pregnant woman being HIV positive is considerably higher if she takes part in known HIV risk behaviours. For more information, see [HealthLink BC File #08m HIV/AIDS](#).

Before testing of pregnant women became standard practice and effective medicines to treat HIV were available, 6 babies a year in B.C. caught HIV from their mothers. This would take place before or during birth. It now happens less often, and usually occurs only with women who were not tested in pregnancy or who had received no pregnancy care.

In B.C., for those women who have been diagnosed with HIV infection and have received specialized pregnancy and delivery care, there has been no mother to child transmission of the virus. This shows how important and effective testing for HIV and specialized care is to protect your baby from HIV infection.

### How do you get tested?

Your doctor or a health care professional can easily arrange a test for HIV with your knowledge and consent. Counseling is available before and after the test for HIV.

### Where can you get more information?

You can get information about being tested for HIV from the Public Health Nurses in your local health unit.

For more information about HIV testing during pregnancy, contact the Oak Tree Clinic located at the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre at 604-875-2212 or visit [www.bcwomens.ca/Services/HealthServices/OakTreeClinic/default.htm](http://www.bcwomens.ca/Services/HealthServices/OakTreeClinic/default.htm).

For more HealthLink BC File topics, visit [www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles/index.stm) or your local public health unit.

Click on [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca) or call **8-1-1** for non-emergency health information and services in B.C.

For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance, call 7-1-1 in B.C.

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