HEPATITIS C AND PREGNANCY

NEXT STEPS

MARICOPA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

DID YOU RECEIVE A POSITIVE HEPATITIS C TEST?

What you can do:

1. **TREAT IT**
   Hepatitis C is curable! Although treatments are not approved for use during pregnancy, you can start after pregnancy.

2. **TEST YOUR CHILD**
   Pregnant people who have hepatitis C can pass the virus to their unborn baby. This is called perinatal hepatitis C. Work with your child's pediatrician to decide when your child should be tested and what test your child should get.



Treatment cures more than 95% of people with hepatitis C.

WHAT TESTS CAN MY CHILD GET?

At 2-6 Months of Age

When exposed during pregnancy, your baby should receive a **hepatitis C RNA confirmatory blood test** between 2-6 months old. This helps to check if they might have the active viral infection. Talk to your child's doctor about next steps.

At or After 18 Months of Age

Test by **hepatitis C antibody test*** to see if your child has antibodies for hepatitis C virus. If positive, follow up with a hepatitis C RNA confirmatory blood test.

**Testing for hepatitis C antibodies before 18 months is not recommended because it may detect maternal antibodies, passed from mother to child.*

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

For more information about hepatitis C, visit HepFreeAZ.org

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MARICOPA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

How does hepatitis C spread?

Hepatitis C spreads mostly when blood from one person gets into another. This can happen by sharing needles, pipes, or other works used for drugs. It can also spread from unsterile tattoos or piercings, blood transfusions, unprotected sex, or sharing things like personal care items that might have blood on them.

How can I protect my family?

To prevent spreading hepatitis C, use protection during sex, & avoid sharing care items like toothbrushes, razors, and nail clippers. People who use drugs should avoid sharing syringes, pipes, straws, filters, and spoons. Keep your lips moisturized to prevent them from cracking or bleeding. There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C, but hepatitis C can be cured.

If I am currently pregnant, can I get treatment for hepatitis C now?

No, hepatitis C treatment is not recommended during pregnancy. Talk with your doctor about your treatment options to cure hepatitis C after your pregnancy.

What if I get pregnant in the future?

Before pregnancy, get tested if you participate in activities with a high risk for hepatitis C, including substance use, or sexual contact with someone who is living with hepatitis C. Hepatitis C virus testing is part of prenatal care with every pregnancy to prevent transmission to the baby.

Is it safe to breastfeed my baby?

Yes, it is safe to breastfeed your baby. However, if you have cracked or bloody nipples, temporarily stop breastfeeding and talk with your doctor about whether you should discard any stored breast milk.

Is it safe to hug and kiss my baby?

Yes, it is safe to hug and kiss your baby. Hepatitis C is not spread through saliva, coughing, or sneezing. You may hug and kiss your baby without the fear of spreading hepatitis C to them.

Does my delivery method affect my child's chance of contracting hepatitis C?

No, you can have a vaginal delivery or a C-section. Please talk to your doctor to discuss the best delivery method for you and your baby.

What should I do if my child tests positive for hepatitis C?

If your child tests positive for hepatitis C, please talk to their doctor about a link to care for monitoring and follow up. Treatment is recommended for all children with hepatitis C infection 3 years and older, usually with help from a specialist.

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