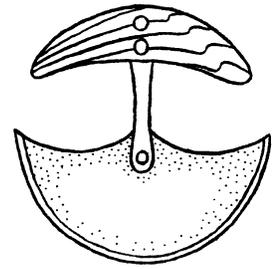


## Information for Inuit Community Members

### Fact Sheet HIV and Pregnancy



## HIV and Pregnancy

### I'm pregnant and I've just found out I'm HIV positive

If you're pregnant and just found out that you are HIV positive **don't panic**, because with medical help, the chance of your baby being HIV positive can be less than 1%. This is why it is important to get help from a doctor right away to keep the baby from getting HIV.

With no medical help, the chance of your baby being infected with HIV is between 20 and 45%.

HIV can be transmitted from a mother to her baby:

- during pregnancy
- during childbirth
- after birth, through breastfeeding

The most important things you can do to prevent your baby becoming HIV positive are:

- start taking HIV medications after the first three months of pregnancy
- you continue to take them during labour
- have the baby through caesarean section
- giving the baby a short course of HIV medications after birth
- not breastfeed

### Which HIV medications can I take?

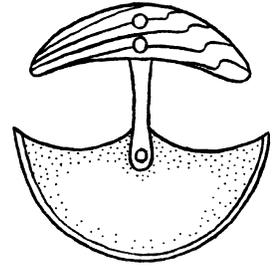
There are a few different drug therapies that you can take to prevent your baby becoming HIV positive. Treatment can begin after the first three months of pregnancy. Therapy must also continue during labour, and for the baby, immediately after it is born.



## **Information for Inuit Community Members**

### **Fact Sheet HIV and Pregnancy**

---



#### **I'm HIV positive and already on antiretroviral drugs**

Sometimes an HIV positive woman who is already on treatment will find out that she is pregnant. If this happens, you should see your doctor right away to find out what is best for you to do. It may be sensible for you to change the drugs that you are taking, as some drugs are more suitable during pregnancy than others. It is not a good idea to come off or change your therapy before seeing your doctor. If you stop treatment suddenly during pregnancy, your viral load may increase and there may be higher risk of HIV spreading to the baby. If you are thinking of changing or stopping treatment, you **must** see your doctor.

#### **Are HIV drugs safe for my baby?**

Yes, most HIV drugs are safe for your baby. Some studies have shown that the baby may have increased risk of baby being born premature or low birth weight due to the use of HIV drugs during pregnancy, particularly protease inhibitors. If this is true, it is better to have a slightly smaller baby than a baby that is HIV positive.

#### **Is a C-section better than a natural birth?**

A C-section is an operation used to safely take the baby out of the mother. When a mother is HIV positive, sometimes this is how they will deliver the baby, as it protects the baby from direct contact with her mother's blood and other bodily fluids.

#### **Should I breastfeed my baby?**

If your baby is HIV positive, do not breastfeed. HIV is found in breast milk. If you do breastfeed there is a big chance of passing HIV to your baby. So talk to your health worker or nurse to get formula and learn how to mix it so that you do not have to breastfeed the baby.

