

CYTOMEGALOVIRUS (CMV)

"sy-toe-MEG-a-low-vy-rus"

TIPS & TRICKS



CMV is the most common virus transmitted from mothers to babies during pregnancy.

One out of three women who contract CMV during pregnancy transmit the virus to their baby. If an infant is born with CMV, it is called congenital CMV (cCMV). cCMV is thought to be the leading cause of non-genetic hearing loss in the U.S.

What is CMV?

CMV is a common virus, affecting 50-85% of adults in the United States. CMV is prevalent among children, especially those attending daycare. One third of children have already contracted the virus before the age of 5. Once infected, the virus stays in an individual's body for life, even after resolution of symptoms. The virus will likely remain dormant (inactive) in the body after initial infection, but can reactivate with suppression of the immune system.

Is CMV dangerous?

Some healthy individuals may not experience any symptoms if infected with CMV. Others may experience mild cold/flu symptoms (i.e. fatigue, headache, sore throat). However, if a woman contracts CMV while pregnant, the virus can be passed to the developing baby, which may result in health issues.

What is congenital CMV?

Roughly 1 out of 200 infants is born with CMV, which is called congenital CMV (cCMV). Ninety percent of infants with cCMV are asymptomatic (no visible signs/symptoms) at birth. 10-15% of children without visible symptoms are expected to develop reduced hearing. Visible symptoms may include microcephaly (small head size), jaundice (yellow color of skin), or petechia (small brown-purple spots on the skin). Seventy-five percent of children with visible symptoms have reduced hearing, which may decline over time.

Is CMV treatable?

Healthy adults and children typically recover from CMV without medical treatment. Newborns with cCMV may receive treatment in the form of antiviral medications (Ganciclovir or Valganciclovir), which may prevent further decline of hearing and other symptoms but cannot cure CMV.

Is CMV preventable?

Yes! CMV spreads through bodily fluids (i.e. saliva, blood, tears, urine, breast milk). Due to the high prevalence among young children, daycare workers, teachers, and healthcare workers are at increased risk for exposure. While there is not currently a CMV vaccine, individuals with weakened immune systems and women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant should take the following steps to reduce risk of infection: do not share drinks/food/utensils with children, do not put a pacifier in your mouth, do not share a toothbrush, wash your hands often, avoid saliva when kissing a child (i.e. kiss forehead instead), frequently clean toys and other surfaces in contact with saliva or urine.

Where can I get more information?

www.cdc.gov/cmv | www.nationalcmv.org | www.marchofdimes.org/complications/cytomegalovirus-and-pregnancy.aspx



Center Phone Number: (317) 232-7349 || Center Email: CDHHE@ISDH.in.gov

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Women frequently in contact with young children may be at increased risk of CMV exposure.

CMV is prevalent in young children and can be transmitted through body fluids (i.e. urine, blood, saliva). Women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant can take steps every day to reduce their risk of CMV exposure.



Do not share food, drinks, utensils or straws.

Sharing utensils may seem like the easiest and quickest option. However, if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, it is not recommended.



Do not put a pacifier in your mouth.

Continue to practice caution, even when your hands are full. Parents may be tempted to hold or clean a pacifier by putting it in their own mouth. Saliva can pass from the pacifier to you and your unborn baby.



Wash your hands.

Practice good hand hygiene! Wash your hands with soap and warm water often, especially after changing diapers, feeding young children, or touching children's toys.



Do not share a toothbrush.

Children want to be like their parents! They see you brush your teeth, and they want to do the same. Store your toothbrush out of children's reach.



Avoid contact with saliva when kissing a child.

Show affection safely! Opt to kiss a child's forehead or give a hug rather than kissing on or near the mouth.

National CMV Foundation. (n.d.). *Prevention Tips*. National CMV Foundation. <https://www.nationalcmv.org/overview/prevention-tips>.



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