

Common Questions

Is it safe to breastfeed my baby?

Yes, it is safe to breast/chest feed your baby. HCV is not transmitted through breastmilk. However, avoid breast/chest feeding if your nipples are cracked or bleeding.

What kind of delivery should I have?

You can have a vaginal delivery or a c-section. C-sections have not been found to prevent HCV transmission.

If I hug and kiss my baby, will my baby get HCV?

No, HCV is NOT transmitted through saliva, coughing or sneezing. HCV is spread through blood and unprotected sex. You can hug and kiss your baby without fear of spreading HCV.



Other Resources

Philadelphia Department of
Public Health (PDPH)

www.PhillyHepatitis.org

Perinatal Hepatitis C Program
Bersabeh.Tekle@phila.gov
(215) 685-6629

If you are pregnant and have tested positive for HCV you can get support or assistance with referrals to treatment, if applicable.

Call (215) 685-6629 for more information.



A Guide for Pregnant & Postpartum People Living with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)



What is Perinatal Hepatitis C?

If you have hepatitis C and are pregnant, HCV can be passed to your baby during pregnancy or during birth. This is known as perinatal hepatitis C.

Perinatal hepatitis C transmission is the leading cause of HCV in children.

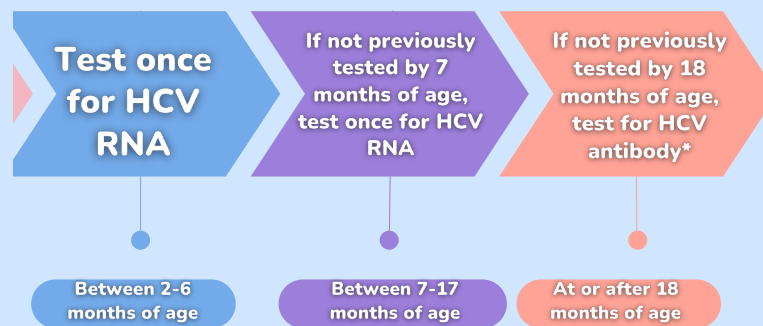
There is currently no way to prevent transmission of hepatitis C to your baby during pregnancy or during birth, but there are things to do to protect your baby's health.

It is Important to Let Your Baby's Doctor Know You Have Hepatitis C!

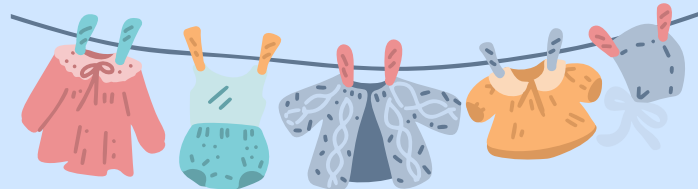
Talk to your baby's doctor about getting your baby tested for HCV.

About 1 in 20 babies born to pregnant people with HCV will develop long term HCV infection. That chance increases if the pregnant person also has HIV.

Knowing your baby's HCV status will help you get the care they need.



*If positive follow up with an HCV viral load test to confirm



WHAT CAN I DO FOR MYSELF IF I HAVE HCV?

Once you deliver your baby, medicine is available to CURE your HCV.

Taking control of your HCV will help to protect your future babies from HCV and protect the health of your liver.

Avoid drinking alcohol and review all medications with your doctor, especially if you are also taking medication for HIV.

TAKING CARE OF YOU & YOUR BABY

HCV can impact the development and the overall health of your baby, for the rest of their life.

Most HCV positive children show little or no sign of being sick. The only way to know if your baby has HCV is with a blood test.

Not receiving care for HCV can lead to permanent liver damage.

PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES

HCV can be transmitted through unprotected sex and through blood-to-blood contact. Be sure to practice safer sex (Ex. condoms) and have your close contacts get tested for HCV.

Don't share items that may be contaminated with blood such as injection equipment, razors, or nail clippers.

No vaccine is available to protect either a baby or pregnant person from HCV, but you should keep all of your child's vaccinations up-to-date.