

Cytomegalovirus



What is cytomegalovirus?

- Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus that can cause infection in babies in up to 2 percent of all pregnancies.
- CMV may be dormant for life and could be associated with serious complications if the person undergoes a transplant or is immunosuppressed.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates about one out of every 200 infants are born with congenital CMV infection, and one in five infants with the infection will have long-term health problems.
- Some babies may have signs of congenital CMV infection at birth. These signs include: premature birth, deafness, liver, lung, and eye problems, small size at birth, small head size, and seizures.
- Most babies with signs of congenital CMV infection at birth may have long-term health problems, such as hearing or vision loss, intellectual disability, small head size, lack of coordination, weakness or problems using muscles, seizures, and intellectual or behavioral impairment.
- Most babies with congenital CMV appear normal at birth. Yet these infected babies without signs of congenital CMV infection at birth may have hearing loss. Hearing loss may be present at birth or may develop as late as age 18.

How is it transmitted?

- The most serious infections are transmitted to the fetus in the womb if the mother is infected during pregnancy.
- CMV is transmitted by direct contact with infectious body fluids, such as urine or saliva. CMV can be transmitted sexually and through transplanted organs and blood transfusions.
- CMV can be transmitted to infants through contact with maternal genital secretions during delivery or through breast milk.
- Healthy infants and children who acquire CMV after birth generally have few, if any, symptoms or complications from the infection. Women who are infected with CMV can still breastfeed infants born full-term.
- The virus has been shown to spread among household members and young children in daycare centers.

What are steps to prevent infection?

- Inform pregnant women of the virus and preventive measures.
- Note concerns regarding heightened exposure in nurseries and early child care centers.
- Reduce exposure to the most common sources of CMV:
 - Don't share food, drink, straws, or eating utensils with young children;
 - Don't kiss young children on or around the mouth or lips; and
 - Do wash hands well after changing all diapers and wiping runny noses or mouth drool.

Where can I find more information?

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/cmV/clinical/index.html>
- American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/PEHDIC/Documents/CMV.pdf>
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: <https://www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Practice-Bulletins/Committee-on-Practice-Bulletins-Obstetrics/Cytomegalovirus-Parvovirus-B19-Varicella-Zoster-and-Toxoplasmosis-in-Pregnancy>
- The Lancet: [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(17\)30143-3/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(17)30143-3/abstract)
- Congenital CMV Disease Research Clinic and Registry: <https://www.bcm.edu/departments/pediatrics/sections-divisions-centers/cmVregistry>



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