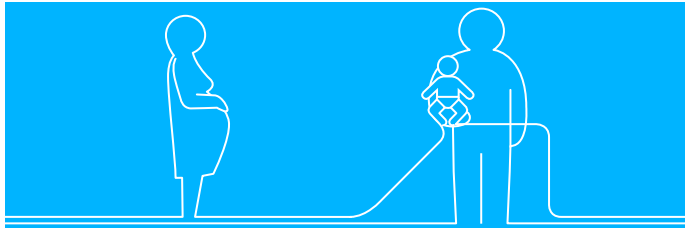


ABOUT HIV

Families and children

People living with HIV can have a family and have children who are healthy and HIV negative. Even if your child is living with HIV, treatment is very effective and can give him or her a normal and long life.



Having a baby without passing HIV on to your partner

If you would like to have a baby with your partner, but one of you is HIV positive and the other one is HIV negative, you'll want to conceive a child without passing HIV on during sex. Effective HIV treatment can allow you to do this.

In certain situations, the risk of HIV transmission is extremely low. It's considered safe for a couple to have unprotected sex in order for the woman to become pregnant, as long as:

- the HIV-positive partner is taking their HIV treatment as prescribed, *and*
- they have had an undetectable viral load for more than six months, *and*
- neither of you has any sexually transmitted infections (STIs), *and*
- you only have unprotected sex on the days when you are ovulating.

The HIV-negative partner could be given anti-HIV drugs to take around the days you have unprotected sex as another preventive step (this is called pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP).

If either you or your partner also have hepatitis C, talk to your healthcare team if you are thinking about becoming pregnant. Hepatitis C treatment sometimes includes a drug called ribavirin which can harm the unborn child.

Preventing mother to child transmission

Every year thousands of women living with HIV give birth to healthy babies who do not have HIV. Without treatment, HIV can be passed on, but with the right treatment and care, the risk of transmitting HIV to your baby is very low.

Transmission can be prevented by:

- taking anti-HIV drugs during pregnancy,
- making a careful choice between caesarean section and vaginal delivery,
- not breastfeeding, and
- giving the new baby an anti-HIV drug for a few weeks.

HIV treatment during pregnancy reduces the risk of passing HIV on to a baby by lowering the mother's viral load so that the baby is exposed to less of the virus while in the womb and during birth. In addition, some anti-HIV drugs cross the placenta and enter the baby's body where they can prevent the virus from taking hold.

HIV can also be passed on in breastmilk. Formula feed is safer, provided you have access to clean water. Other women living with HIV can give you advice on how to explain to family and friends why you are not breastfeeding.

Men living with HIV don't need to worry about passing HIV on to their baby, so long as the mother is HIV negative. Safer sex is important during pregnancy and breastfeeding, to ensure that the mother remains HIV-negative.

Getting your children tested

If you are a woman living with HIV, it's very important that all your children are tested for HIV. Ideally, this should happen at birth.

If that didn't happen, it's important to get your children tested, even if they are older and appear to be in good health.

The test may give you the reassurance that your child does not have HIV. However sometimes, a child can live with HIV without any apparent problems for many years. If your child's test result is positive, HIV support organisations can help you think about how to tell your child about their diagnosis.

The development of www.pro-vich.info and www.about-hiv.info has been made possible thanks to generous support from Janssen. Our funder has had no editorial control over the content of either site. The information on this site is intended to support, rather than replace, consultation with a healthcare professional. Talk to your doctor or another member of your healthcare team for advice tailored to your situation.

A collaboration between: NAM aidsmap, European AIDS Treatment Group, Aids Action Europe, East Europe & Central Asia Union of PLWH and ITPCru (The Treatment Preparedness Coalition).

For more information: www.about-hiv.info; www.pro-vich.info; www.aidsmap.com

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ABOUT HIV

Families and children



HIV in children

With careful management of their health, children with HIV can have a happy, normal and – thanks to HIV treatment – long life. HIV treatment is very effective in children with HIV, making it a long-term, manageable condition.

Medical care for children with HIV is specialised. The way HIV develops in babies and children is different to adults, especially as HIV progression can be faster. Your child's health should be monitored regularly at a specialist clinic.

Children with HIV need to be given some information about their illness, but this will be a process. What you say will depend on the child's age, their level of understanding, and their readiness to know.

It's up to you whether you tell other people that your child has HIV. It's a good idea to think carefully about this before making a decision. As your child gets older, they can decide who knows and how they tell people, but they may need your support to plan this.

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