



HIV, Hepatitis B, and Syphilis Testing During Pregnancy

The Physicians at Alliance Obstetrics and Gynecology, in addition to The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), recommend that all pregnant woman undergo testing for HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B at specifically timed periods in their pregnancy.

Many sexually transmitted infections that affect a pregnant woman can also affect her newborn baby. With proper testing these infections, which could be transmitted to your baby, may be prevented. Therefore, testing for these infections during pregnancy can lead to better health outcomes for both the pregnant woman and her unborn baby.

Recommendations state that every pregnant woman should be tested for HIV, Hepatitis B, and Syphilis at their initial prenatal visit. Alliance tests all OB patients for these particular conditions at their initial visit. MDHHS also recommends additional testing of HIV, Hepatitis B and Syphilis at 26-28 weeks.

In addition, any woman that is pregnant with high risk factors (i.e. having an STD, using or injecting drugs, or having more than one sex partner) should be retested for HIV, Hepatitis B, and Syphilis at 36 weeks or at delivery, even if previous tests were negative.

Testing is important as often people do not show signs or symptoms of infection. Pregnant women with these infections may need to be treated or begin a treatment regimen during pregnancy. Pregnant women can transmit these infections to their unborn baby. The baby would be at greater risk of being infected or developing severe health problems due to this infection. Starting treatment early could significantly reduce the risk to your unborn baby. Alliance strongly recommends following these guidelines set by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.



Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes AIDS. HIV can enter the bloodstream by body fluids, such as blood or semen. Once the virus invades the body it attacks and kills the key cells of the immune system. Making the body is less able to fight infections. It can take months or years before HIV infection develops into AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). Unless a woman gets tested, she may never know that she has been infected with HIV until she becomes sick.

HIV can be treated, but not cured. Taking anti-HIV medication can help a person infected with the virus, stay healthy for a long time. This can also decrease the chance of passing the virus to others.

During pregnancy, HIV can pass through the placenta and infect the baby. During labor and delivery, the baby may be exposed to the virus in the mother's blood and other body fluids. Breastfeeding can also transmit the virus to the baby.

You and your doctor can discuss things you can do to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to your baby. These things could include the following:

- Taking a combination of anti-HIV medication during your pregnancy.
- Delivering your baby by Cesarean Section, if lab test show that your level of HIV is too high.
- Take anti-HIV drugs during the labor and delivery process as needed.
- Give anti-HIV drugs to your baby after birth.
- Do not breastfeed.

By following these guidelines, 99% of HIV infected women will not pass HIV to their babies. Thus, it is very important information to know the Mother's HIV status to protect both Mom and baby.