

# STIs and Pregnancy

## **How can pregnant individuals lower their risk for STIs?**

- The surest way to reduce your risk of STIs during pregnancy is to not have sex.
- Have sex only with someone who's not infected and who has sex only with you.
- Condoms can reduce your risk of getting some STIs if used correctly (see reverse side for instructions) every single time you have sex.
- A condom protects only the area it covers. Areas the condom doesn't cover can be infected.

## **How can a STI affect me and my baby?**

- You may pass the infection to your baby before, during, or after the baby's birth.
- Some STIs can cause you to go into labor too early. This makes it more likely that your baby will be born weighing less than 5 pounds, which is less than a healthy newborn baby should weigh.
- The infection may cause your baby to be born with serious health concerns.
- Untreated STIs can cause stillbirth or miscarriage.

## **When should I be tested?**

- Everyone who is pregnant should be checked for STIs during their first prenatal visit, third trimester visit, and at delivery.
- Even if you have been tested for STIs in the past, you should be tested again when you become pregnant.
- It is a good idea to get tested for these STIs when pregnant: chlamydia, gonorrhea, Hepatitis B, HIV, syphilis, and trichomoniasis ("trich").

## **What happens if I don't get treated?**

- You have a higher risk of getting HIV if you have unprotected sex with a person living with HIV.
- You are more likely to give birth prematurely. Your baby is more likely to be underweight (less than 5 pounds at birth).
- The infection will stay in your body if left untreated. It may spread and cause serious health problems to you and your baby, including miscarriage and stillbirth.

## **If you are pregnant and you have a sexually transmitted infection (STI), you may pass the infection to your baby.**

- You can have a STI without knowing it, because many STIs do not have symptoms.
- If you don't get treatment for a STI, it can lead to serious health problems for both you and your baby.
- Many STIs are easily treated and cured.