

STDs and Pregnancy

How can pregnant individuals lower their risk for STDs?

- The surest way to reduce your risk of STDs 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 STDs 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.
- Washing the genitals, urinating, or douching after sex will not prevent any STD.

How can a STD affect me and my baby?

- You may pass the infection to your baby before, during, or after the baby's birth.
- Some STDs 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 STDs can cause stillbirth or miscarriage.

When should I be tested?

- You should be tested the first time you see a doctor after you find out you are pregnant.
- Even if you have been tested for STDs in the past, you should be tested again when you become pregnant.
- It may be helpful for some of the tests to be done again when you get closer to your due date.
- It is a good idea to get tested for these STDs 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 disease (STD), you may pass the infection to your baby.

- Everyone who is pregnant should be checked for STDs during their first prenatal visit, third trimester, and at delivery.
- You can have an STD without knowing it, because many STDs do not have symptoms.
- If you don't get treatment for an STD, it can lead to serious health problems for both you and your baby.
- Many STDs are easily treated and cured.