

How do I protect myself from getting HIV while pregnant?

- ❖ Safe sex is the key especially during pregnancy.
 - Condoms are free at health centers or public health units.
 - Condoms will not only help to stop you from getting HIV but will also protect you from other diseases such as:
 - Chlamydia
 - Gonorrhea (the clap)
 - Hepatitis B
 - Syphilis
- ❖ Do not share needles or rigs. If possible avoid drugs as these may affect the health of your child.
 - You can get new needles at the health centers.

For more information or help, contact:

The NWT Help and AIDS Information Line:
1-800-661-0844 for anywhere in the NWT
920-2121 in Yellowknife

OR

Your doctor, community health center or public health unit.

PRENATAL HIV TESTING

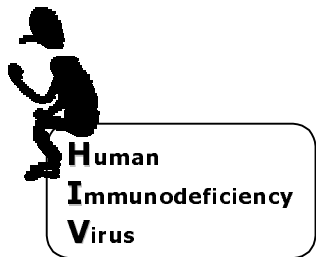


WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

What is HIV/AIDS?



- ❖ HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.
- ❖ HIV weakens the body so it cannot fight other germs, which means the body will get infections more easily.
- ❖ There is no medicine to stop you from getting HIV; if you know you have HIV, you can be treated.
- ❖ You can have HIV in your body without becoming sick with AIDS, especially with new treatments available.
- ❖ You can have HIV in your body and pass it on to others without knowing it.
- ❖ It is very important to be tested to know if you have HIV.



**Acquired
Immuno-
Deficiency
Syndrome**

Why is it important to get tested during pregnancy?

- ❖ A mother who is HIV-positive can pass HIV on to her child during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and while breastfeeding.
- ❖ In Canada, 71% of children with HIV were infected by their mothers during pregnancy.

- ❖ Drugs given to an HIV-positive mother during pregnancy can lower the risk of her passing HIV on to her unborn child.

What is the test for HIV?

- ❖ The HIV Test: measures HIV antibodies (disease fighters) in your blood.
- ❖ Antibodies: substances made by your body to fight infection. They are specific to the infection they are trying to fight off. (e.g. HIV => HIV antibodies).
- ❖ If your test result comes back POSITIVE: You have HIV (but not necessarily AIDS).
- ❖ If your test comes back NEGATIVE this could mean:
 - You do not have HIV.
 - You are in the window period (some people do not make HIV antibodies until 3-6 months after they are infected with the virus).



How will I react to the test result?

- ❖ If the test is negative, you may feel relieved, but it is important to remember to protect yourself and anyone with whom you have sex or share needles.
- ❖ If the test is positive, you may find that you are worried and frightened about being positive, and worried for your unborn child, but at least you now know you have HIV.
- ❖ You may wish to discuss with your doctor the options available during pregnancy.