

# Reduce the risk of CMV in pregnancy

**Wash with care**  
**Kiss with care**  
**Don't share**



## **What is CMV?**

*Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection*

## **What is CMV?**

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus spread through contact with bodily fluids.

Most healthy people infected with CMV will remain well. Some will have flu-like symptoms, like fever and tiredness.

If a pregnant woman is infected with CMV, there is a risk that her unborn baby will also become infected. This is called congenital CMV. Whilst most babies born with CMV will be healthy, congenital CMV can cause disabilities including hearing loss, cerebral palsy and learning problems. CMV can also cause stillbirth.

Young children can pass the virus on to their carers through their urine, saliva and nasal mucus.

**People who care for or work with young children are at an increased risk of infection.**

**All pregnant women and those planning a pregnancy can follow simple steps to reduce their risk of CMV.**

## How to reduce your risk of CMV in pregnancy

### Wash with care



Wash hands carefully, especially after changing nappies and wiping noses

### Kiss with care



Avoid kissing young children on the lips, try a kiss on the forehead instead

### Don't share



Don't share food, drinks or cutlery with young children and avoid putting a child's dummy or toothbrush in your mouth

If washing hands is not possible, then alcohol based hand sanitisers are a good alternative.

**These steps will also reduce the risk of other illnesses, like colds/flu and diarrhoea. Good hygiene practices keep families and kids healthy and strong.**

## Can you test for CMV?

CMV screening is not recommended for all pregnant women. If a woman is suspected to have CMV (shows symptoms or has abnormal ultrasound results) testing might be recommended.

Testing is recommended for babies born to mothers with CMV during pregnancy or babies who do not pass their newborn hearing test.

Babies born with CMV should have their hearing and vision checked regularly. Sometimes, problems may not be seen at birth.

## Can CMV be treated?

Pregnant women diagnosed with CMV should see a doctor to discuss treatment options.

Early antiviral treatment may help babies who have CMV and are sick at birth. Treatment should be discussed with a doctor.





**CMV is the most common infection passed from mothers to babies during pregnancy.**

Every year in Australia an estimated 2000 babies are born with CMV. Of these around 400 will experience long-term disabilities, including hearing loss.

**Want more information?**

Australian Government:  
Department of Health  
Pregnancy Care Guidelines  
[health.gov.au/resources/pregnancy-care-guidelines/](http://health.gov.au/resources/pregnancy-care-guidelines/)

Congenital CMV  
Association of Australia  
[cmv.org.au](http://cmv.org.au)

Cerebral Palsy Alliance  
[cerebralpalsy.org.au/cm/](http://cerebralpalsy.org.au/cm/)

NHMRC  
Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th Edition)

Virology Research Laboratories,  
POW Hospital, UNSW  
[virologyresearch.unsw.edu.au](http://virologyresearch.unsw.edu.au)

Scan here for more information about CMV or to order more CMV pamphlets



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