



Important News for Pregnant Women

Tests Commonly Done in Pregnancy

Why do I need to get these common blood tests when I am pregnant?

During pregnancy, your family physician, nurse practitioner or Obstetrician will do blood tests to detect infections and other conditions. If undetected during pregnancy, they can be harmful to your baby. If any test results are positive, treatment can reduce the risk of harm to your baby.

Do I have to be tested?

Testing is good prenatal care for you and your baby and is recommended for all pregnant women. However, you do have a choice to be tested or not.

What blood tests are commonly done in pregnancy?

The following are some of the blood tests done during pregnancy to detect infections and other conditions. Some people may have a communicable disease but have no symptoms.

Blood Typing and Rh Factor: This is to test for your Blood Type (A, B, AB, or O) and your Rh Factor (Rh positive or negative). If you are Rh negative, you may need to receive Rh(D) immune globulin to protect your baby.

Hepatitis B: Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver. If you have this, there is a 90% chance your baby will be infected. Your baby can be given treatment at birth that will prevent infection in almost all cases.

Rubella (German Measles): German Measles occurs very rarely now because of good childhood vaccination programs. However if you are not immune to German Measles, a vaccine can be safely given after your baby is born to prevent future infection.

Syphilis: Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection that can be in your system for a long time without symptoms. If you have this infection and are not treated during the pregnancy, your baby could be seriously affected.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus):

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). Any person can have HIV for years and not know it or feel sick. Although the number of HIV cases on PEI is low, the risk is still present. Women as well as men can become infected with HIV. If you or your partner has ever had unprotected sex or shared needles with a person whose HIV status is unknown, there is a chance that you have the virus.

HIV Testing

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada and the Canadian Paediatric Society recommend that all pregnant women be tested for HIV infection. Early detection and treatment is the key to preventing newborn HIV infection. Your health care provider will offer HIV testing as part of your routine prenatal care. HIV is a separate blood test, done only with your consent. Testing should be done as early as possible during your pregnancy. If you decide not to have the test, you will be given the same prenatal care as other women.

Some Facts about HIV and Pregnancy:

If you do have HIV, even without symptoms, there is a 1 in 4 chance you could pass it to your baby. The virus can be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy, at delivery or during breastfeeding. Taking special medicines called antiretroviral during pregnancy and after the birth greatly reduces a baby's risk of HIV infection. Antiretroviral medicines prevent the virus from multiplying giving the immune system a chance to recover and grow stronger.

Protecting Your Personal Information

All test results are private between you and your health care provider. If a test is positive for a communicable disease, a public health professional may do follow up on other possible contacts (other persons who may be infected). Your name will not be given to any of these contacts

For more information or help call these numbers for free, confidential information:

- Motherisk Health Line (national)
1-888-246-5840 to talk to a nurse about HIV and pregnancy
- AIDS PEI 1-800-314-2437
- Regional Public Health Nursing
 - Charlottetown (902) 368-4530
 - Kensington (902) 836-3863
 - Montague (902) 838-0762
 - O'Leary (902) 859-8720
 - Souris (902) 687-7049
 - Summerside (902) 888-8160
 - Tignish (902) 882-7366
 - Wellington (902) 854-7259



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