Avert › HIV ›

Empowering people through knowledge ›

Getting pregnant & HIV

How to have an HIV-free baby if you and/or your partner are living with HIV.

Follow us **@avertaids**

Help us empower people through knowledge by donating to **www.avert.org/donate**

Health & care information you can trust
The Information Standard · Certified Member

Conceiving safely

People living with HIV can conceive safely and have HIV-negative children.

However, it's important to take precautions when trying to conceive, so you and your partner can stay healthy. This is true whether:

1.
You're in a mixed status relationship – where one partner is negative and the other is positive

2.
Or you're both living with HIV – as unprotected sex risks transmitting different strains of the virus, which can make treating your HIV more difficult

If you don't know your status, get tested before trying for a baby, so you can conceive safely.

Having an HIV-free baby

! Remember, HIV can be passed from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.

! So if you're a woman living with HIV, you will need to take precautions during this time as well.

Read our 'HIV, pregnancy & childbirth' and 'Living with HIV & breastfeeding' factsheets for more information.

Why should I plan my pregnancy?

Planning your pregnancy means you can:

- both get tested for any STIs

- make sure your viral load is low if you're living with HIV to reduce infection risk (*see next page for more information*)

- start taking PrEP if you're HIV-negative (*see next page for more information*)

- time sex for during ovulation – maximising your chance of conception and minimising your risk of HIV transmission

- start taking folic acid, a vitamin taken by women to promote their baby's health.

Speak to your healthcare worker before trying for a baby.

They can help you plan your pregnancy to protect your baby and your partner.

Need more information? See our 'HIV testing' factsheet.

How can I conceive safely?

HIV treatment (if you're HIV-positive)

Antiretroviral treatment can reduce the amount of HIV in your body, making transmission during sex less likely.

If you wish to minimise the risk of transmission further, only have sex without a condom during ovulation.

U=U If your viral load is undetectable, your risk of transmission during sex is zero. This makes it safe to try for a baby at any time.

PrEP (if you're HIV-negative)

PrEP is a pill taken by the HIV-negative partner, to prevent HIV infection.

If you are taking PrEP properly there is virtually no risk of getting HIV.

This makes it safe to try for a baby through unprotected sex.

PrEP isn't available everywhere. Ask your healthcare professional if it is available for you.

In vitro-fertilisation (IVF)

In IVF the egg and sperm are combined outside of the body and then implanted directly into the uterus.

IVF eliminates any risk of transmission.

Access to IVF can be limited, so speak to a healthcare worker to find out if it's an option for you.

Artificial insemination

Artificial insemination protects the male partner from HIV infection.

Instead of having unprotected sex, the man's sperm is inserted into the woman's vagina using a syringe.

It is possible to do this at home, but speak to a medical professional first to get advice.

Remember, artificial insemination works best during ovulation.

Spermwashing

Spermwashing protects the female partner from HIV infection.

Semen is the fluid that comes out of a man's penis when he ejaculates. It contains sperm and seminal fluid.

Spermwashing separates sperm from the surrounding seminal fluid. Unlike seminal fluid, sperm does not contain HIV.

Meaning sperm can be safely inserted into a woman's vagina via artificial insemination.

Access to sperm washing can be limited in some settings. Ask your healthcare professional for more information.

Know your rights

- ✓ You have the right to choose if, when and how you conceive.
- ✓ You have the right to refuse abortion or sterilisation.
- ✓ You have the right to treatment, even if you refused it before.