



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.

*Artwork by Tan Martin, Aboriginal midwife.
Photography by Melinda Hooper of Milly Moments Photography.*

Want more information?

Australian Government:
Department of Health
Pregnancy Care Guidelines
health.gov.au/resources/pregnancy-care-guidelines/

Congenital CMV
Association of Australia
cmv.org.au

Cerebral Palsy Alliance
cerebralpalsy.org.au/cm/

The Sydney Children's
Hospitals Network
CMV Factsheet
sch.n.health.nsw.gov.au/

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

An initiative of



Reducing the risk of CMV during pregnancy



So what is CMV?
Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection

What is CMV?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common herpesvirus 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. In rare cases CMV can be life-threatening.

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.

The 5 steps to reduce the risk of infection



Wash hands after activities like changing nappies



Don't share food, drinks, utensils, and avoid putting a child's dummy or toothbrush in your mouth



Avoid contact with saliva, kiss children on their forehead instead of the lips



Carefully dispose of nappies, used wipes and tissues



Clean toys that children have had contact with

These steps will also reduce the risk of other illnesses, like colds/flu and diarrhoea in pregnancy. 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.