

Infections during Pregnancy that Affects Baby

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We all encounter several viral and bacterial infections throughout our life. Here we are discussing about infections that cause difficulties in pregnancy, and their symptoms [1].

Chickenpox during Pregnancy: Chickenpox infection in pregnancy may become dangerous to both mother and baby [2].

There is a 90% chance that mother immune to chickenpox infection. But if the mother never had chickenpox or if she is not sure if she has had it and if she comes in contact with a child or adult who does, speak to doctor immediately. Blood test can find out easily.

Cytomegalovirus in Pregnancy: Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus that is part of the herpes group, which also cause cold sores and chickenpox. CMV infections are more common in the young children [3].

Infection can be dangerous during the pregnancy time, as it can cause problems like visual impairment, blindness, hearing loss, learning difficulties and epilepsy for unborn babies.

It is not possible to prevent a CMV infection, but individual can reduce the risk by:

- Washing hands regularly with soap and hot water (if you have been changing nappies, or work in a nursery or daycare centre).
- Not kissing young children on the face – it is better to hug them or kiss them on the head.
- Do not share food or cutlery with young children, and do not drink in the same glass

Group B streptococcus in Pregnancy: Group B streptococcus (GBS, or group B strep) rarely causes harm.

It causes no problem in most of the pregnancies but, in a small number, group B strep infects the baby, usually just before or during labour, leading to serious illness [4].

Infections Transmitted by Animals

Cats

Cat faeces contain toxoplasma—an organism that causes toxoplasmosis. Toxoplasmosis can cause harm to the baby.

Sheep

Lambs and sheep may carry organism which is known to cause miscarriage. They also carry toxoplasma.

Pigs

Research is ongoing to check if pigs are a source of hepatitis E infection. This infection is dangerous very to pregnant women.

Hepatitis B & C

Hepatitis B and C is a virus that infects the liver. Many people with

hepatitis B and C will have no sign of illness, and symptoms but they can be carriers and may infect others.

The virus may spread by sex with an infected person without using a condom, and by direct contact with infected blood. If you have hepatitis B or are infected during pregnancy, you can pass the infection on to your baby at birth.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) in Pregnancy: You'll be offered a confidential HIV test as part of your routine antenatal care. Your doctor will discuss and counselling is available if the result is positive. However, HIV can be passed to your baby during pregnancy, birth, and also during breastfeeding.

Treatment during pregnancy reduces the risk of passing on HIV to the baby. Your baby will be tested for HIV at birth and at regular intervals for 18 months [5].

Herpes in Pregnancy: Genital herpes infection is dangerous for a new born baby. The infection causes ulcers, painful blisters on the genitals. Treatment is available if it occurs in pregnancy.

Slapped Cheek Syndrome: It is common in the children typically, causes a rash on the face and highly infectious. It may be harmful to the baby.

Rubella (German Measles) in Pregnancy: It is rare in UK and a special thanks to the uptake of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination. If mother develops rubella in the first trimester of pregnancy, it leads to a serious problem, including miscarriage and birth defects.

References

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How to cite this article: Tegegne, Boniface. Infections during Pregnancy that Affects Baby. *J Infect Dis Med* 6 (2021) doi: 10.37421/jidm.2021.6.169

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Received 10 April 2021; Accepted 24 April 2021; Published 30 April 2021