



# What You Should Know About HIV

## HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.

Most often, the virus is spread when people have sex or share needles with someone who has HIV. If a woman has HIV, she can pass it to her baby when she is pregnant or breastfeeding.

### What you need to know:

- You can get HIV when you have sex using the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus
- You can help protect yourself. Use condoms every time you have sex. Use condoms no matter how you have sex.
- HIV can spread if you share needles
- Don't share needles to do drugs, get vitamin shots, tattoos, or piercings

### Every pregnant woman should take the HIV test.

In California, it is the law to offer all pregnant women the opportunity to be tested for HIV. It is routine to test pregnant women for HIV. You have the right to refuse the test by telling the health care provider you do not want it at that time.

### Taking the HIV test is a routine part of prenatal care.

Why? You could have HIV and not know it. You could pass it on to your baby during pregnancy, labor and delivery, or breastfeeding. When you get the HIV test, you find out if you have HIV. The test results are private.

If you had a negative test in the past, it is best to take the test again to be certain. It can take up to 6 months after getting the HIV infection before it shows up on the test.



### If you do have HIV, you can get the care you and your baby need.

- There are very helpful medicines now. The sooner a pregnant woman starts the treatment, the better her health will be.
- Treatment can greatly lower the chances of your baby getting HIV. The medicines prevent transmitting HIV in almost 99% of cases. Without medicine, there is a 1 in 4 chance of passing it to the baby. The sooner treatment is started, the better the results will be.
- You can feed your baby with formula to prevent spreading the infection through breast milk