

PATIENT INFORMATION

Screening for HIV / Hepatitis B and Syphilis in Pregnancy

Screening for HIV, Hepatitis B, and Syphilis are strongly recommended in pregnancy.

These infections can be passed onto your baby if appropriate treatment is not given during pregnancy or as soon as possible after the birth.

For HIV infection the latest drug treatments are extremely effective, and HIV infection is now seen as a chronic disease – which means that it cannot be cured but the symptoms can be managed (much like diabetes). It is generally expected that women who are diagnosed with HIV in pregnancy, and receive treatment, remain well and have a normal life expectancy.

With the appropriate care during pregnancy and delivery, and by not breast feeding the risk of passing the HIV infection to your baby is less than 1%

A negative test result does not affect past or future life assurance claims.

If babies born to mothers with Hepatitis B complete a course of vaccinations after birth this reduces their chance of catching Hepatitis B by almost 100%. Mothers are referred for specialist care to improve their long-term health.

Syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease, usually does not show any early symptoms, but the risks to the baby are very high. Syphilis in adults is very easily treated with a course of antibiotics. This will help prevent your pregnancy being at risk of miscarriage and stillbirth and reduce the chance of your baby being born with the physical and developmental problems that syphilis can cause.

Although screening for all three infections is recommended, each is a separate test which can be accepted or declined on an individual basis.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.