



June is National Congenital Cytomegalovirus Awareness Month

About Congenital Cytomegalovirus

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus that usually produces few or no symptoms in children and adults but can cause serious problems in babies infected while in the womb (known as Congenital CMV). It is only when a fetus comes in contact with the virus through the mother's infection that the threat of permanent damage is possible.

Facts

- Anywhere from 50 to 80 percent of all adults have been infected by the time they reach 40, most without being aware of the virus.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists CMV as the most common congenital (meaning present at birth) viral infection in the U.S.
- One child in 150 is born infected.
- CMV is responsible for an average of 400 deaths and permanently disabling over 8,000 children a year.

Possible Effects

- Hearing or vision loss
- Mental disabilities
- Microcephaly (small head/small brain)
- Seizures
- Lack of coordination
- Spleen problems
- Liver and Lung problems
- Premature birth

Prevention

In the U.S. 50 to 60 percent of pregnant women are at risk of contracting CMV, most likely by coming in contact with an infected child. An estimated 70 percent of healthy children between ages one and three may have CMV. CMV is transmitted via bodily fluids, including saliva, urine, tears, blood, and mucus. Changing diapers, kissing children on the mouth, and sharing food and utensils are means of transmitting the virus. The single most important method of prevention is very simple: **WASH YOUR HANDS!** Other methods include:

- Do not share food, drinks, or eating utensils used by young children
- Do not put a child's pacifier in your mouth
- Do not share a toothbrush with a young child
- Avoid contact with saliva when kissing a child
- Clean toys, countertops, and other surfaces that come in contact with children's urine or saliva

Testing and Treatment

Most babies with congenital (meaning present at birth) CMV infection never have health problems. But in some babies, congenital CMV infection causes health problems that may be apparent at birth or may develop later during infancy or childhood. When infected with CMV, most women have no symptoms, but some may exhibit mononucleosis-like signs. If this occurs, consult a physician immediately. For more information, please visit the CDC website at cdc.gov/cmvi/index.html.