

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Bureau of Genetics and Healthy Childhood



## Cytomegalovirus (CMV) Infection:

What women who are pregnant or plan to become pregnant need to know.

If you have questions about CMV, contact:

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services  
Bureau of Genetics and Healthy Childhood  
PO Box 570  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
800-877-6246  
MO Relay 800-735-2466



*What is CMV?*

*How is CMV Spread?*

*How common is congenital CMV?*

*Why is CMV a serious concern?*

*How can CMV be prevented?*

*What should be done at birth?*

This project was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number B04MC23390, Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, \$24,499, 0.0% financed with nongovernmental sources. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.

[health.mo.gov/living/families/genetics/newbornhearing/index.php](http://health.mo.gov/living/families/genetics/newbornhearing/index.php)

## What is CMV?

Cytomegalovirus, or CMV, is a common virus that affects people of all ages. It is typically harmless to the general population and affects over half of the people in the US before the age of 40. Most people do not know they have CMV or may have only mild flu-like symptoms.

CMV during pregnancy can cause severe health complications to an unborn baby. If you are pregnant or about to become pregnant, you can decrease the risk of contracting CMV.

### How is CMV spread?

The virus is passed from an infected person through direct contact with bodily fluids, such as urine or saliva. CMV is very common in home and daycare settings. Healthy children 1-3 years of age are at high risk for contracting CMV from other children.

### How common is congenital CMV?

Congenital means the condition is present at birth. One in 150 children is born with congenital CMV each year. One in every five children born with CMV will suffer from permanent health complications and life-long disabilities.



PLANNING AND PREPARING | PRENATAL TESTING | PREVENTION TIPS

### Why is congenital CMV a serious concern?

When a pregnant woman contracts CMV, she may pass the virus to her unborn baby. When this happens, the baby is born with congenital CMV. Congenital CMV is far more serious than contracting the virus after birth, as it may cause permanent health complications and life-long disabilities such as hearing loss, vision loss, cerebral palsy, and mental and physical disabilities. Congenital CMV is a leading cause of hearing loss and other neurological problems in children.

### What should be done at birth?

If you think you were exposed to CMV while pregnant, contact your healthcare provider to consider having yourself and your baby tested.

If your baby does not pass the hearing screening, you should ask your physician about CMV testing within the first 21 days of life.

### How can CMV be prevented?

Wash your hands with soap and water after:

- Changing diapers
- Feeding a young child
- Wiping a young child's nose or mouth
- Handling children's toys

Avoid sharing food, drinks, or eating utensils with a child. Avoid contact with a child's saliva when snuggling and kissing. Throw away used diapers and tissues.

PRENATAL CARE

POSTNATAL CARE

