HIV Treatment Guidelines for Pregnant People and Their Infants

Last updated: February 1, 2023

Together, we can change the course of the HIV epidemic...one woman at a time.

#onewomanatatime  www.thewellproject.org  #thewellproject
What Are HIV Treatment Guidelines?

- Help providers, people living with HIV:
  - decide when to start, stop, change HIV medications
  - choose among different HIV drugs

- Prepared by experts in HIV prevention and treatment during and after pregnancy
US-Based Guidelines

• Prepared by US Department of Health and Human Services:
  – General HIV treatment guidelines
  – HIV treatment guidelines during pregnancy
  – HIV treatment guidelines for children

• Regularly reviewed and updated by HIV experts

• The Well Project also has fact sheets on general HIV treatment, caring for children and getting pregnant

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Global Guidelines

• Guidelines differ by country
• Global agreement on HIV treatment for all people living with HIV
• Other recommendations can vary by region, for example on infant feeding:
  – Breast/chestfeeding recommended in low-income countries
  – Bottle feeding was recommended in high-income countries
  – British and US guidelines now recommend shared decision-making between parent and provider about infant feeding
    ○ Guidelines help providers support parents who chest/breastfeed

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January 2023 Perinatal Guidelines

- Provide guidance on the following:
  - Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV
  - Care for people who may become pregnant
  - Getting pregnant when one partner lives with HIV
  - HIV drugs during pregnancy
  - Infant feeding
  - Caring for the newborn
Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

- Offer PrEP to people trying to get pregnant if:
  - Intimate partner violence
  - Repeated post-exposure prophylaxis
  - Condomless sex
  - Injected drugs
  - Sexually transmitted infections
  - Substance use
- If viral load undetectable -> U=U
- Only Apretude or Truvada recommended

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PLWH Who May Become Pregnant

• Ask whether person living with HIV is planning to have biological children
  – If no: interactions between hormonal contraceptives and some HIV drugs
  – If yes:
    o undetectable viral load before conception
    o possible changes to HIV drug regimen
    o joint decision-making

• Same advice as for everyone else:
  – Stop/reduce alcohol, smoking, street drugs
Getting Pregnant

• If non-birthing partner lives with HIV:
  – If undetectable viral load -> U=U
  – PrEP for HIV-negative partner

• If birthing partner lives with HIV:
  – Get viral load to undetectable before conception
  – Infertility treatment should not be denied

• See also our fact sheet on Getting Pregnant

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HIV Drugs in Pregnancy

• If already taking effective HIV drugs:
  – Usually keep taking the drugs
  – Drug regimen may need to change in some cases
• If not on HIV drugs when becoming pregnant:
  – Start treatment right away
  – Drug resistance testing is recommended
• Cabenuva: may not be able to switch drugs
• Information on specific HIV drugs:
  – May not be available because pregnant people often cannot participate in clinical trials

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Infant Feeding

• Encourage shared decision-making
  – Formula if parent’s viral load not undetectable
    ○ Access to safe water, enough formula not guaranteed even in US

• Judgment-free support for feeding decision
  – Don’t involve Child Protective Services!

• UK database: breast/chestfeeding safe

• See our fact sheets on this topic

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Caring for the Newborn

- HIV drugs recommended for infants to prevent them from acquiring HIV
- Specific drugs and duration differ:
  - If parent virally suppressed during pregnancy:
    - Zidovudine for 4 weeks
  - If parent not virally suppressed or has acute HIV:
    - Several HIV drugs for 2-6 weeks
  - Breastfed infants should also get HIV drugs
  - Only certain drugs are recommended for infants
    - Different if baby is very premature
Other Information in Guidelines

- Procedures to avoid during labor and delivery
- People who don’t know their HIV status when they give birth
- Pregnancy in transgender/gender diverse people
  - May need to consider gender-affirming hormones taken

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Taking Care of Yourself

• Guidelines are a set of recommendations
• They are always changing and based on the most up-to-date information from studies and clinical trials
• They are only general suggestions!
  – OK for you and your healthcare provider to choose therapies for your specific situation

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• To learn more, please read the full fact sheet on this topic:
  – HIV Treatment Guidelines for Pregnant People and Their Infants

• For more fact sheets and to connect to our community of women living with HIV, visit:
  – www.thewellproject.org
  – www.facebook.com/thewellproject
  – www.twitter.com/thewellproject