HIV Treatment Guidelines for Pregnant People and Their Infants

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

#onewomanatatime #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

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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 recommended in high-income countries
  – But: people in high-income countries may want to breast/chestfeed
    ○ Guidelines help providers support that choice

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March 2022 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

• Next update expected later in 2022
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 daily Truvada recommended

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

Same advice as for everyone else:
- Stop/reduce alcohol, smoking, street drugs
• 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 becoming pregnant

• See also our fact sheet on Getting Pregnant
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
  - Certain drugs as preferred
  - Drug resistance testing is recommended

- Information on specific HIV drugs:
  - May not be available because pregnant people often cannot participate in clinical trials

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Some people living with HIV in Global North want to breastfeed
- UK database shows that breast/chestfeeding safe
- Not everyone in Global North has access to formula and safe water
- Recommendation to bottle-feed in North America, Europe not yet changed

See our fact sheet on this topic
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 acquired HIV close to giving birth:
    - Several HIV drugs for 2-6 weeks
  - Only certain drugs are recommended for infants
    - Different if baby is very premature

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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
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