



Women and TORCH: Testing for Infectious Diseases Early in Pregnancy is Key.



Several infectious diseases can be passed on from a pregnant woman to her baby, increasing the risk of miscarriage, birth defects, and developmental problems. These infections—collectively known as TORCH—include toxoplasmosis, other (e.g., syphilis, HIV), rubella (measles), cytomegalovirus (CMV), and herpes simplex virus.

The best way for a woman to protect her unborn or newborn child from infectious diseases is to protect herself by getting tested early in her pregnancy, or even before becoming pregnant.

Infectious diseases pose a global threat to women and their babies.

HIV

- Worldwide, approximately **4 million babies born with HIV have died** since the start of the HIV pandemic.¹

CMV

- CMV**—a double-stranded DNA herpes virus and the most common virus transmitted during pregnancy—**affects up to 1.5% of births.**²

- One in five** children born to mothers who transmitted CMV to their infant during pregnancy will have permanent health problems or disabilities, such as hearing loss, vision loss, and seizures.³



- Roughly **40%** of pregnancies in women with untreated early **syphilis result in perinatal death.**⁴

If not detected early during pregnancy, neonatal infections can lead to permanent health problems.

A wide range of complications can result from these infectious diseases, including:

- Miscarriage
- Premature birth
- Congenital defects (mental disability, blindness, and liver, kidney, and cardiovascular disease)
- Infant or childhood mortality
- Newborn cataracts



- Deafness
- Mental retardation
- Heart defects
- Seizures
- Jaundice
- Low platelet levels

What steps can women take to prevent these infections?



- Vaccination** is available for some of the diseases, including rubella and varicella-zoster (the virus that causes chicken pox).



- Taking precautions** to avoid exposure, such as frequent hand washing, can aid in disease prevention.⁵

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What's the best way for women to protect their unborn babies?

Get tested! Screening for common infectious diseases utilizing the TORCH panel may help to prevent many of these potential birth defects, as some of the TORCH infections can be effectively treated if the mother is diagnosed early in her pregnancy.⁶

Visit <http://www.siemens.com/women-and-torch> to learn more.