

## Children and HIV - Newly diagnosed with HIV, part 5

Most HIV-positive children under the age of 13 were infected during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.

Better treatment and prevention strategies have lowered HIV infection rates for children in the United States.



If your child is diagnosed with HIV, here are some things to remember:

- Typically, it takes 2-3 months for an accurate diagnosis of HIV in a newborn infant.
- 20% of infants with HIV will acquire an opportunistic infection, or OI, within their first year of life. These infections are called "opportunistic" because they take the opportunity to attack when the immune system is weak.
- Children with HIV **may** be slower to reach developmental milestones such as walking or talking.
- Many children with HIV reach adolescence with fairly healthy immune systems. However, children can also get the same opportunistic infections as adults.
- Children with HIV suffer the usual childhood infections more frequently and more severely than uninfected children.



- These infections can cause more colds, fever, diarrhea, dehydration, pneumonia, and seizures. These and other problems can cause nutritional problems and may result in long hospital stays.

- Treating HIV is similar in adults and children, but healthcare providers must also consider age-related differences in lab tests, and medication safety.
- HIV infected children often face other concerns such as family issues, or bullying.
- In adolescence they may also begin to face issues regarding sex and physical appearance.

Be sure to get answers to any questions you have about HIV/AIDS. Your public health department, health care provider, and public library can help.



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