

HIV and breastfeeding - Pregnancy, part 6

A mother can pass HIV to her baby during the pregnancy, while in labor, while giving birth, or by breastfeeding.

If you have HIV, do **not** breastfeed.

Using a breast milk substitute such as infant formula is strongly recommended for a mother with HIV since she can pass the virus to her baby through breastfeeding.



A mother can pass the HIV virus to her baby through breastfeeding, even if she is taking her HIV medicines properly.



In the United States, infant formula is a safe and healthy alternative to breast milk.

Recommendations about breastfeeding with HIV may be different for other countries where clean water is not always available.

This is because impure water can be very dangerous for babies if it is used to mix infant formula. So both the risk of impure water and the risk of HIV need to be considered.

If you are interested, you can also ask your doctor, midwife, or pediatrician about getting human breast milk from a milk bank. However, this may be expensive.

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.



Text is from HIV/AIDS sources from the Department of Health and Human Services and adapted by HealthReach and Healthy Roads Media. This project has been funded in whole or in part with Federal funds by the National Library of Medicine award number HHSN2762015000111 awarded to the Center for Public Service Communications. Images from iStock.com.

Creation Date: March 2017