



Ministry of Health

Keeping You & Your Baby Alive & Healthy



Why must your baby take Septrin?

Since there is a small chance that the virus was transmitted, Septrin protects your infant from infections and greatly increases chance of survival.

Why does your baby need to be tested for HIV at 6 weeks of age?

Since you are HIV+, your baby can be infected with HIV. Since babies with HIV get sick quickly, you need to find out at a very early age if your child is HIV+ so that he or she can be given proper treatment immediately. If your baby is found to be HIV+, your baby will receive ART for life.

Why might your baby need a 2nd HIV test?

If you have breastfed anytime in the six weeks prior to the first HIV test, the test will not show if HIV was transmitted to your baby during that time period. Because of this, you will need to return for a second HIV test 6 weeks after you stop breastfeeding.

Why must your baby visit a health worker for regular care starting at birth?

Since your baby may be HIV+, your baby may experience signs of HIV, poor growth, delayed mental development, or infections. Babies with signs of HIV will not survive long without treatment. Problems must be identified quickly, which is only possible when you visit the health centre regularly to get your baby examined.

You should come to the health centre every month until your baby is 6 months of age, and once every 3 months until your baby is 24 months of age.

Please come back for you next appointment:

Date: ____/____/____
Day Month Year

Clinic /Location: _____

What happens after you receive your baby's HIV results?

If your baby is HIV-positive:

- **Do not wait! Bring your baby to an ART clinic.**
- Keep giving your baby Septrin every day.
- Continue breastfeeding until 2 years, of age, adding nutritious feeds at 6 months.

Remember 1 out of every 2 HIV+ babies (50%) will die by 2 years of age unless they receive treatment.

If your baby is HIV-negative:

- Follow safe feeding practices, such as breastfeeding exclusively until the baby is 6 months, and then adding other nutritious feeds.
- If you are breastfeeding at 1st HIV test, keep giving Septrin and return for 2nd HIV test six weeks after you stop breastfeeding.
- If you are not breastfeeding at 1st HIV test, get more information from your health care worker.
- Return to health centre for regular check ups. As an HIV-exposed infant, your baby is vulnerable and must see health workers.
- If your baby becomes sick or shows symptoms of HIV, visit a health centre immediately.

If you have any problems or questions contact a healthcare worker:

Healthcare Worker Phone No: _____

Health Centre Phone No: _____

What you need to know if you are pregnant and HIV-Positive

Why is it beneficial that you know your HIV status when you are pregnant?

Now that you know you have HIV, you can take steps to prevent passing the virus to your baby and to keep yourself healthy. HIV can be transmitted to your baby during pregnancy, delivery and breastfeeding. This leaflet will explain the steps you need to take to keep you and your baby healthy.

Why must you take ART and Septrin every day?

ART is a treatment that you take every day that helps prevent your baby from getting HIV during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and keeps you from getting sick.

Septrin is a medication that you take every day to help prevent infections that could make you sick and increase your chances of infecting your baby with HIV.

How do you and your partner benefit when you take ART?

When taken correctly, ART increases your chances of survival and prevents your partner from HIV infection if he is negative. You should disclose your status to your partner and encourage him to test for HIV too. In order for the medicine to work well, you will need to take the ART every day for the rest of your life.

Why is it so important that you return to the clinic for antenatal visits at least 4 times during your pregnancy?

If you visit a health worker regularly during your pregnancy, you have a good chance of preventing your baby from getting HIV and of staying healthy yourself.

What should you expect at the health centre during antenatal visits?

You will:

- receive refills of your ART and Septrin.
- receive information on the benefits of testing and how to disclose your status to your partner.
- develop a birth plan with the guidance of your healthcare worker.
- receive preventative treatment for malaria and other infections.
- be examined for potential complications that could harm you or your baby and increase the risk of HIV transmission.
- receive continued guidance on how to feed your baby, and test your baby after delivery.

Why should you deliver at the health centre?

Complications can develop during labour and delivery, which can threaten your life and your baby's. Unlike in a home setting, a health centre has trained staff, equipment, supplies and medicine that can provide the care and treatment to safely deliver your baby. Delivering in a health centre is very important for HIV+ women since delivery complications are much more common among HIV+ women and their newborn babies. Also, your baby will get ARV treatment early.

How should you feed your baby when you are HIV positive?

- Breastfeed, if possible, as breast milk provides the best food for your baby. It has all of the nutrients and water for your baby to grow and it protects your baby against many infections, such as diarrhoea.
- For the first 6 months, you should breastfeed exclusively (no mixing with other feeds).
- After six months of age, continue breastfeeding while introducing other nutritious feeds.
- You should breastfeed your baby for 12 months.

How can you prevent transmitting the virus to your baby during breastfeeding?

You must continue taking ART and Septrin every day for you and your baby to benefit. If you take the ART during the entire time that you breastfeed, there is low risk of HIV transmission. Your baby will also be given ART every day from birth to 6 weeks, which will greatly reduce the chances of HIV transmission through breastfeeding.

