

**“CMV IS A COMMON VIRUS  
SPREAD THROUGH CONTACT  
WITH BODILY FLUIDS”**

### What is CMV?

Infection occurs commonly in children under 2 years old, and in teenagers.

### What are the symptoms of CMV?

Most adults and children with CMV infection will remain well. Some may have cold-like symptoms like feeling tired, having a sore throat, swollen glands or fever. Once a person becomes infected, the virus stays in that person's body for life but is usually inactive.

### How is CMV spread?

The virus is found in urine, saliva, nasal The virus is found in urine, saliva, nasal mucus, breast milk, vaginal fluid and semen of infected people. It is spread:

- Through direct contact with infected saliva, urine or other body fluids.
- From pregnant woman with infection to her unborn baby
- In breast milk
- Through sexual contact

People who care for or work with young children are at increased risk of infection as they have more contact with body fluids e.g. nappy changes.

## Further Information



### Congenital CMV Association of Australia

[www.cmv.org.au](http://www.cmv.org.au)

### Cerebral Palsy Alliance

<http://www.cerebralpalsy.org.au/cmv/>

### The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network

CMV fact sheet

<http://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/>

### NSW Kids and Families

Having a Baby - Handle with Care:  
Looking after yourself during pregnancy

### NHMRC

Staying Healthy - Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th Edition)  
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>

### Virology Research Laboratories POW Hospital, UNSW

[www.virologyresearch.unsw.edu.au](http://www.virologyresearch.unsw.edu.au)

**PROTECT**  
your **BABY** from **CMV**  
during pregnancy



## So what is CMV?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection

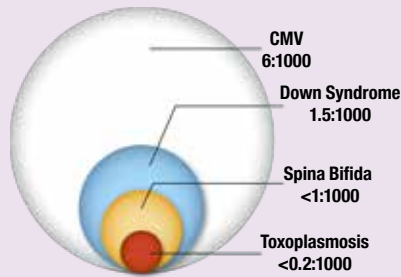
## What is congenital CMV?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is the most common virus passed from mothers to babies during pregnancy. If a pregnant woman is infected with CMV, there is a risk that her unborn baby will also become infected. This is called congenital CMV. About 6 out of 1000 babies born in Australia, have congenital CMV.



Of those 6 infants, 1 or 2 (about 1:1000 overall) will have disabilities of some degree.

CMV is the most common infectious cause of disabilities in newborn babies



## What are the risks of Congenital CMV?

Most babies with congenital CMV infection will remain well. Some infected babies may have a disability. This may include hearing or vision loss, cerebral palsy, developmental delay or learning problems. In rare cases, CMV may cause death.

The highest risk to the unborn baby is with infection for the first time during the first half of pregnancy. If this happens, there is a 1-in-3 chance of a woman passing CMV to her unborn baby.

## HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR UNBORN BABY FROM CONGENITAL CMV?

Women who are pregnant or are planning pregnancy should adhere to the following practices:



Don't share food, drinks, eating utensils or toothbrushes with young children



Avoid contact with saliva when kissing a child



Carefully throw away used nappies and tissues



Clean toys, countertops and other surfaces that come into contact with children's urine, mucous or saliva with simple detergent and water



Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 15 seconds and dry them thoroughly. This should be done after close contact with young children, changing nappies, blowing noses, feeding a young child, and handling children's toys, dummies/soothers.

Over half of pregnant women have had CMV before pregnancy. Women can be re-infected by different strains of the CMV virus. Therefore, all pregnant women should try to protect their unborn baby from CMV (see box: how you can protect your unborn baby from congenital CMV).

### Who should be tested for CMV?

CMV testing is not recommended for all pregnant women. Testing for CMV may be recommended for pregnant women who develop a viral illness or when ultrasound reveals a fetal problem.

Pregnant women and women planning pregnancy may wish to talk about CMV testing with their doctor, if they are at high risk for CMV.

CMV testing is not recommended for all

babies. Babies born to mothers diagnosed with CMV infection in pregnancy should be tested for CMV.

Hearing loss is the most common sign of congenital CMV. Babies who do not pass the hearing test at birth (SWISH) may also be tested for CMV.

### Can congenital CMV be treated?

Pregnant women diagnosed with CMV infection should see a specialist doctor about treatment options.

Early antiviral treatment may help babies born with hearing loss or other problems from CMV. Babies born with problems from CMV should be discussed with a specialist paediatrician. Babies infected with CMV should have their hearing and vision assessed regularly. This is because problems may not be seen at birth.