

# Pregnancy & having children

Clear information about pregnancy, family planning and living well with HIV

## Pregnancy and HIV today

### Planning a family

Many people living with HIV have healthy, HIV-negative babies. With the right care, pregnancy and parenthood are possible.

What has changed

- HIV treatment is now highly effective.
- Most people who are on treatment and well supported can plan a pregnancy safely.
- Good HIV care before, during and after pregnancy helps protect both parent and baby.

## Getting the right support early

### Talk to your clinic team

If you are thinking about having a baby, it helps to speak to your HIV clinic team as early as possible. They can talk through treatment, tests and any extra support you may need.

Your care may include

- HIV clinic appointments and blood tests
- Advice from maternity services
- Treatment planning before or during pregnancy
- Support with birth, infant testing and feeding

You do not need to have all the answers before asking for help. It is fine to start with questions.

## Treatment in pregnancy

### Staying on treatment

Taking HIV treatment as prescribed is one of the best ways to protect your own health and reduce the chance of HIV being passed on to your baby.

What your clinic may do

- Check your viral load regularly
- Review your current medication
- Make changes if needed to make sure treatment is right for pregnancy
- Work closely with maternity teams to plan your care

The aim is to keep you well and your viral load as low as possible throughout pregnancy.

## **Pregnancy, birth and infant care**

### **Reducing transmission**

With effective treatment and proper care, the chance of passing HIV to a baby can be reduced to a very low level.

### **Care around birth may include**

- Planning the safest way for your baby to be born
- Advice about feeding your baby
- Medicine or testing for the baby if needed
- Follow-up appointments after birth

Your HIV and maternity teams will explain what is recommended for your own situation.

## **Feeding and family life**

### **Feeding your baby**

Advice about breastfeeding or formula feeding may depend on your health, treatment and current medical guidance. This is something to discuss directly with your HIV and maternity teams.

### **Family life with HIV**

Many people living with HIV go on to raise families, work, study and plan for the future. HIV may still bring worries or stigma, but it does not mean giving up on parenthood or everyday life.

You may still want support with:

- anxiety about pregnancy or birth
- talking to a partner
- dealing with stigma or other people's assumptions
- planning for the future as a parent

## **Where to find trusted information**

For clear, up-to-date information about pregnancy and HIV:

- **aidsmap.com** – information about pregnancy, treatment and family life
- **i-base.info** – detailed information about treatment in pregnancy and infant care
- **tht.org.uk** – Terrence Higgins Trust: support and HIV information
- Talk to your **HIV clinic team, specialist nurse or maternity team** for advice about your own care

### **Important note**

This sheet gives general information only. Always speak to your HIV clinic team, midwife or doctor for personal medical advice about pregnancy, birth, feeding and treatment.