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Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

What is CMV?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus in the herpes virus family. 50% of people have been infected by early adulthood, and up to 85% by 40 years of age. Peaks of infection occur in children less than 2 years of age, and adolescence. Once a person becomes infected, the virus remains dormant in the person's system, and they are considered to be "immune" to CMV. Pregnant women with young children, or who work closely with young children (such as childcare, school etc.) are at increased risk of exposure to CMV.

What are the symptoms of CMV?

People with a healthy immune system often do not develop symptoms if infected. However, if symptoms do arise, the person may experience fatigue, sore throat, swollen glands and a fever (temperature exceeding 37.5°C).

How can I avoid CMV?

CMV is transmitted through infected bloods, saliva, urine, faeces or by sexual contact.

There is currently no vaccine for CMV. Preventative measures to avoid exposure include:

- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and warm water after: nappy changes and handling child's dirty laundry, feeding or bathing a child, wiping a child's runny nose or drool, handling child's toys, pacifiers or toothbrushes.
- DO NOT: share cups, plates, utensils, toothbrushes or food
- DO NOT: kiss your child on or near the mouth
- DO NOT: share towels, face-washers or sleep in the same bed as the child

What if I have been exposed to CMV?

If you suspect you have been exposed to CMV, contact the clinic and speak with either Dr. Joe, or his midwives, Libby and Lou.



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Parvovirus

What is parvovirus?

Parvovirus (often referred to as “slapped cheek” or “fifth disease”), is a mild rash virus, caused by parvovirus B19. Around 50% of pregnant women will have immunity to parvovirus due to previous infection.

What are the symptoms of parvovirus?

Symptoms of parvovirus are often mild in nature, and are usually non-specific including:

- Rash (typically on the face – red across the cheek – like it has been slapped)
- Sore/aching joints
- General malaise

How can I avoid parvovirus?

Parvovirus is transmitted by direct contact with infected respiratory secretions (ie. droplets from coughing). The following preventative methods can be utilised to decrease risk of infection:

- Frequent hand washing
- Excluding persons with parvovirus from work, child care, schools etc.

What if I have been exposed to parvovirus?

It is important to understand that even if you are exposed to parvovirus during your pregnancy, there is usually no serious complications for either yourself or your unborn baby. However, if you suspect you have been exposed to parvovirus, contact the clinic and speak with either Dr. Joe, or his midwives, Libby and Lou.



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Toxoplasmosis

What is toxoplasmosis?

Toxoplasmosis is caused by the parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii*. If you have been infected with toxoplasmosis in the past, you will have immunity. In Australia, primary infection with toxoplasmosis during pregnancy is rare.

What are the symptoms of toxoplasmosis?

Symptoms of toxoplasmosis are usually mild and self-limiting. Symptoms may include:

- Swollen lymph nodes
- Muscle aches & pains
- Fever (temperature over 37.5°C)

How can I avoid toxoplasmosis?

- Avoid raw/undercooked meat
- Wash hands thoroughly after gardening
- Wash raw fruits and vegetables
- Minimise contact with cats and their litter – particularly their faeces

What if I have been exposed to toxoplasmosis?

If you suspect you have been exposed to toxoplasmosis, contact the clinic and speak with either Dr. Joe, or his midwives, Libby and Lou.



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Varicella Zoster (Chickenpox)

What is varicella zoster?

Varicella zoster (chicken pox) is a highly contagious virus. Chicken pox can be contagious 48 hours prior to the appearance of active lesions. In Australia, over 85% of women of childbearing age are immune to chicken pox. It is transmitted through airborne/respiratory droplets and direct contact with vesicle fluid (pustules on the rash). Significant exposure includes:

- Living in the same household as a person with active chicken pox
- Face-face contact with a person infected for at least 5 minutes, or being in the same room for 1 hour
- Once all active lesions have crusted over, the person is no longer considered contagious

What are the symptoms of varicella zoster?

- Red, blotchy rash
- Fluid-filled blisters that break easily
- Rash wrapping from spine to torso
- Itchy rash on face/ears

How can I avoid varicella zoster?

If you are notified of a potential exposure to chicken pox OR shingles;

- Avoid contact with the affected person until ALL lesions have completely crusted over
- The affected person **MUST NOT** be at work, and should cover up all active lesions when around people
- Thorough and regular hand washing
- Avoid direct contact with active lesions of a person affected by chicken pox/shingles

What if I have been exposed to varicella zoster?

It is important to note that the vast majority of pregnant patients already have immunity to chicken pox (due to previous infection OR vaccination). However, if you suspect you have been exposed to varicella zoster, contact the clinic and speak with either Dr. Joe, or his midwives, Libby and Lou.

Reference: Australasian Society of Infectious Diseases (2014) *Management of Perinatal Infections*

<https://www.asid.net.au/documents/item/368>