

What should you do if you are, or may be, pregnant?

Antiretroviral (Anti-HIV) drug can be administered to pregnant patients with HIV to reduce the risk of vertical transmission to babies.

- If you are pregnant and need to take PEP, you should discuss this with the travel clinic/infectious disease doctor with experience in HIV infection.

Prevention in Travelers

- All travelers should be advised to practice safe sex during travel.
- Body piercing and tattooing should be avoided while travelling.
- Healthcare workers and travelers at risk travelling to endemic regions should consider post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) before they travel.

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Patient and Family Education

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Introduction

It is a viral infection caused by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV); it is more common in some countries than the others.

Transmission occurs via:

- Sexual intercourse with an infected partner
- Infected blood and blood products.
- Vertical transmission from infected mother to her newborn child.
- Percutaneous exposure via contaminated instruments during medical, dental, acupuncture and other body piercing procedures.
- Splashing of blood onto mucous membranes (e.g. the eye or mouth) or onto broken skin can also transmit infection but risk is much lower than via needles. Splashing blood onto intact skin does not transmit HIV infection.

What is the risk of catching HIV from a needle stick injury?

It is about 4 in 1000.

In the event of a needle stick injury, you should:

- Encourage bleeding from the site of the injury (do not squeeze)
- Wash thoroughly with warm running water and soap
- Test the source for HIV, if possible
- Consult Your doctor for further evaluation

HIV and AIDS

HIV Virus degrades the immune system and increases susceptibility to infections. On an average, it takes around 10 years for AIDS to develop blood test become positive in about 6 weeks after infection, but may take up to 6 months, more advanced blood tests can detect virus as early as 5 days after infection.

Will taking anti-retroviral drugs prevent you from catching? (Post exposure prophylaxis (PEP))

Taking drugs for 4 weeks after possible exposure to HIV will reduce the risk of transmission by about 80%. Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) should be administered as soon as possible, preferably within 1 hour - 72 hours after exposure.

Unprotected sex should be avoided until repeated serology confirmed to be negative

Interactions with other drugs

Anti-Retroviral medications can interact with other drugs, you should check with your doctor.

For travelers needs Anti-malarial Co-artem should be avoided.

What side effects can you expect from the drugs?

All the drugs chosen for PEP are safe but can have side effects and must be taken with food to minimize side effects. Anti-emetics, anti-diarrheal drugs and paracetamol can be taken, if needed.

Side effects of these drugs are usually very mild, and may include nausea, diarrhea, skin changes, headaches, muscle pains; occasionally abnormal dreams, a. Some drugs can also cause flatulence and fatigue.