

HIV-free babies Update 2013

Prevent HIV!

We are learning about how to prevent HIV all the time. We want to share what we have learnt since this booklet first came out.

Remember to go to your antenatal clinic as early as possible. You must go **as soon as** you know you are pregnant. It is important to start prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) treatment as soon as you are pregnant and HIV positive. If you are HIV negative, you need to have HIV tests every 12 weeks while you are pregnant and breastfeeding.

Keep taking your ART. You will not have to change your treatment if you are already on ART (anti-retroviral treatment). Studies show that your ART is safe for your baby (see pages 7, 20 & 38 in the book).

Changes to the PMTCT programme

There are **FOUR big changes – the 4 Es**

1. For **Everyone** – ART is now for **all HIV-positive pregnant women**
2. **Easier Treatment** – ART is now in a **combined tablet (3 in 1)** called an FDC
3. **Early Treatment** – ART is **started on the same day** you test HIV positive
4. **Extended Treatment** – ART must be taken throughout **pregnancy and breastfeeding**

What do these PMTCT changes mean?

1 When you are pregnant

- When you are pregnant and HIV positive you will be started on ART. The treatment is a **single tablet** called an FDC (fixed dose combination).
- This FDC tablet replaces the AZT tablet and is easier to take. You only take **one** tablet, **once** a day, **every** day.
- During labour you **carry on taking** the FDC tablet once a day every day.
- You will be asked some questions to see **if you have TB**.
- If the nurse thinks you might have TB, she will send you for more tests. You may need to have a **chest X-ray** and a **sputum collection** (what you cough up).
- If you are HIV negative, then you will be retested for HIV **every 12 weeks** (3 months).



2 After the birth

- If you are on lifelong ART, you need to continue with the FDC tablet once a day **for life**.
- If you were told that your FDC tablets are not for life, then you would take the tablets until 7 days **after** you stop breastfeeding your baby.
- Your baby will be given nevirapine syrup soon after birth. He or she will take this syrup **every day** for 6 weeks.
- If your baby **weighs less than 2.5 kg**, he or she will have an HIV test done before you are discharged home.



3 At 6 weeks after delivery

- Your baby will have an HIV test called a **PCR test**.
- If your baby is sick any time before 6 weeks, the nurses at the clinic could test for HIV earlier.
- If you are breastfeeding **and** on ART that was started during pregnancy, your baby can stop taking nevirapine syrup.
- If you are breastfeeding and **not** on ART, then your baby must continue to take nevirapine syrup.
- If you are not breastfeeding, your baby can also **stop** taking nevirapine syrup.
- Your baby will be started on cotrimoxazole syrup. He or she must take this until the nurses tell you when to stop. Do **not stop** before this time.
- If you tested negative during pregnancy and are breastfeeding, you will be asked to test for HIV every 12 weeks. Remember it is **your right** to make sure that your baby is safe at all times and that your health is protected from HIV. So you can request an HIV test at **any time**.



Testing of your baby

- If all is well, your baby will be tested at **6 weeks** – read the information on the previous page. If your baby is not well, he or she will be tested earlier.
- If you are breastfeeding your baby, the next HIV test will be **6 weeks after** breastfeeding has stopped.
- All babies are tested again at **18 months** at the immunisation visit.



PMTCT: Prevention of mother-to-child transmission

