

# HIV: Children 0 to 2 Years Old

Here are some common questions from parents and caregivers of children who have HIV.

## What does my child need to know about HIV?

- At this age, your child has no understanding of his illness. So, you do not need to discuss HIV.
- The biggest worry your child has is likely about the medical procedures he will have at clinic visits. Your role is to support and comfort your child during each visit. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how you can be the most helpful to your child.

## How do I treat my child?

- Treat your child the same as you would any other child so she can lead a full and happy life. Give your child with HIV the very same activities, responsibilities and discipline (nurture and guidance) as you would any other child.

## How can I keep my baby and others safe from germs?

- Your baby does not pose a risk to others. The only extra care needed is when your child is bleeding. Bandage all cuts and always wear gloves when you touch or handle anything with blood on it.
- Try to keep your baby away from crowds and people who are sick with illnesses such as colds. Because your baby's immune system may be weak, he may get sick more easily.

- Wash your hands often. This is the best way to stop the spread of germs. Handwashing helps to keep you and your baby healthy and safe from common illnesses. Wash your hands every time after changing a diaper and using the bathroom. Wash your hands before you prepare or eat food as well. Handwashing helps keep all babies healthy.
- Read our handout on *HIV: Infection Control*.



## What about medicines?

- Your child's doctor may give medicines to help keep your child well.
- Be consistent. Give the medicine at the right time of day and in the correct amount.
- Your child may not like the taste of the medicine. She may refuse, protest or spit it out.
- Your child needs the medicine so do not give up. Ask your nurse, doctor or pharmacist for hints on how to give the medicine to your child.
- Do not miss doses. Be honest with your doctor when asked if all medicines were taken.
- It is important you give medicines as your doctor tells you.
- Tell your doctor or nurse right away if you are not able to get your child to take her medicines.
- Read our handout on *HIV: Making Medicines Easy*.

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## Will my baby grow normally?

- Sometimes children with HIV have growth or developmental delays. If you, or your doctor, think your child may be behind in thinking, moving, talking or playing, ask to have your child tested.
- If your child is found to have a delay, there are services to help. The sooner your child gets help, the better the outcome for your child.
- If you have any questions or worries, please call Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies at 1-800-322-2588.

## What about sisters and brothers?

- Bringing a new child into a home with other children can be stressful. If the baby is infected with HIV, the added attention given to the baby can increase stress levels for you and your other children.
- Give your other children some extra love and care to help remind them that they are still a cherished part of the family.
- Spend some time one-on-one with each of your other children, whether it is a weekly outing or five minutes a day. Remind them that they are also very special.

## Anything else I should know?

- If you, as the parent or caregiver, are going to stay in the hospital, take steps to help your child feel safe and secure while you are away.
- Choose someone to care for your child whom your child knows well and with whom he feels safe.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Your child's health care provider
- Visit these Web sites:
  - [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
  - [www.pedaids.org](http://www.pedaids.org)
  - [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)
- Read our handouts on:
  - *HIV: Children 3 to 4 years old*
  - *HIV: Children 5 to 7 years old*
  - *HIV: Children 8 to 10 years old*
  - *HIV: Children 11 to 13 years old*
  - *HIV: Teens*
  - *HIV Facts*
  - *HIV: Making Medicines Easy*
  - *HIV: Infection Control*
  - *HIV: Talking to Your Child*
  - *HIV: Helping Children Understand the End of Life*
  - *HIV: Talking to Your Child About Sex*
  - *HIV: Teens and Sex*

Some of the material in this handout was adapted from the following Web sites:

[www.4woman.gov/HIV/children.cfm](http://www.4woman.gov/HIV/children.cfm)

[www.aids.org](http://www.aids.org)

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Disclaimer: The inclusion of any Web site link (or resource accessed through a link) does not imply endorsement by Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center. Seek the advice of your child's health care provider before you act or rely upon any information from these resources.

*Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.*

*This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.*