

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
Alabama Emergency Response Technology (ALERT)
Health Alert Network (HAN)
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Increase in Perinatal HIV Cases in Alabama

The Alabama Department of Public Health is collaborating with University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Family Clinic, UAB 1917 Clinic, Medical Advocacy and Outreach, UAB Departments of OB/Gyn and Pediatrics and the Alabama Perinatal Quality Collaborative to investigate a recent increase in the number of cases of perinatal HIV infections in Alabama.

In the four-year period from December 2015 through January 2020, there were a total of three identified cases of perinatal HIV infection in the state. However, since January 1, 2020, five infants have acquired HIV through perinatal transmission. These infants were diagnosed between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. While these cases are still under investigation, preliminary data suggest that all women had presented for prenatal care during their pregnancies.

It is imperative that providers remain vigilant in their efforts to prevent perinatal HIV infection by adhering to the following guidelines:

- HIV testing is standard of care for all pregnant women and is a routine component of preconception care.
- Consistent with CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines, all pregnant women in Alabama should receive both **first trimester and third trimester HIV screening. Third trimester HIV screening should occur at <36 weeks gestational age to allow time to intervene.**
- Providers should order HIV testing with an immunoassay that is capable of detecting HIV-1 antibodies, HIV-2 antibodies, and HIV-1 p24 antigen (i.e., antigen/antibody combination immunoassay).
- All pregnant women should be tested for HIV as early as possible during each pregnancy unless they opt out after counseling regarding the importance of the test.
- All partners of pregnant women should be encouraged to undergo HIV testing when their HIV status is unknown.
- HIV Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a safe treatment for the prevention of HIV in pregnant and breastfeeding women. Please see attached recommendations for PrEP guidelines.
- Women who decline testing earlier in pregnancy should be offered testing again during the third trimester.
- If maternal HIV status is unknown at time of labor, a rapid HIV test should be performed immediately. Women who were not tested for HIV before or during labor should undergo expedited HIV antibody testing in the immediate postpartum period. Testing should be available 24 hours a day and results available within one hour. Maternal HIV status should be confirmed prior to discharge of the women and/or neonate from the hospital.
- Newborns of women who decline HIV testing during pregnancy should undergo rapid HIV testing as soon as possible after birth.
- Results of maternal HIV testing should be documented in the newborn's medical record and communicated to the provider in the newborn nursery.

HIV testing is recommended for newborns and children in foster care and adoptees for whom maternal HIV status is unknown.

For questions regarding maternal or newborn HIV testing or management of a newborn exposed to HIV, dial 205-638-9100 and ask for the Pediatric Infectious Disease Specialist on call. Additional clinical support is available through the National Perinatal HIV Hotline (1-888-448-8765).

To schedule an appointment for an infant exposed to HIV, please call UAB Family Clinic at 205-638-9400 or 888-441-3767.

If you are interested in continuing education and/or technical assistance related to prevention of perinatal HIV infection, email familyclinic@peds.uab.edu.

A detailed version of the Perinatal Clinical Guidelines can be found at <https://clinicalinfo.hiv.gov/en/guidelines/perinatal/whats-new-guidelines>.

HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Guidelines:

Recommended indications for PrEP use in women (at least one):

- Ongoing sexual relationship with an HIV-positive partner
- Infrequent or lack of condom use with 1 or more sex partner of unknown HIV status
- Syphilis or gonorrhea in the past 6 months

People who are not PrEP candidates:

- Acute or established HIV infection
- In a monogamous partnership with a recently tested HIV-negative partner

Women meeting the above indications for PrEP should be referred to PrEP services.

To locate PrEP services in Alabama, [PrEP Locator: A national database for US PrEP providers](#)

A detailed version of the PrEP Guidelines can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/clinicians/prevention/prep.html>

HIV Resources in Alabama:

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/hiv/> - ADPH HIV general information and statistics

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/hiv/provider-locations.html> - Ryan White funded HIV clinics in AL

<https://www.childrensal.org/adolescent-health-family-clinic> - Children's of Alabama pediatric HIV care

<https://www.usahealthsystem.com/find-a-doctor?page=1&service=Pediatric%20Infectious%20Disease&specialty=Pediatrics> – USA pediatric HIV care

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-RdefMRUNM> – “Her Encore” National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Virtual Event