Pregnancy and Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is an infection caused by a virus transmitted to the liver. It is spread by coming in contact with the blood of an infected person. For some it is an illness that resolves on its own. For many others it becomes a long term or chronic infection and requires medication to treat and cure.

- It is now recommended that all mothers get tested before or during pregnancy.
- Transmission of Hepatitis C from mother to baby is the leading cause of Hepatitis C in children.
- The risk to your baby is relatively low, with transmission rate being 5.8%.
- The type of delivery you have does not indicate the chances of transmission.
- If you have Hepatitis C, your baby may have your Hepatitis C antibodies at birth.
- Hepatitis C is not generally transmitted through breast feeding, but cracked nipples during breast feeding is a risk for transmission.

Now what?

- Initial testing should be done at your first well check.
- A second check should be done 6 months or more later.
- If both of those tests come back negative, then it is most likely your baby does not have Hepatitis C.
- If the second test is positive, then you should follow up with a confirmation test known as, RNA (Ribonucleic acid) test, after your child is 3 years old.
- Treatment for children with Hepatitis C typically occurs when the child is much older, as there are currently no approved treatments for young children.
- It is also recommended that anyone who tests positive for Hepatitis C get vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B.

Symptoms of Hepatitis C

- Dark, brownish pee
- Light clay-colored bowel movements
- Stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea
- Jaundice (yellowish skin and eyes)
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Bruising
- Swelling in the legs



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