

EASY C FACTS

Mother-to-Child Transmission

Transmission of the hepatitis C virus (HCV or Hep C for short) from an HCV-infected mother to her unborn infant is uncommon and only happens at the time of birth. In fact, it only happens in about 6 infants out of 100 who are born to mothers infected with HCV. If a mother is also infected with HIV then

the risk of passing HCV to her baby is higher. HCV has not been found to cause problems during pregnancy.

The usual amount of time before testing the baby is 18 months. This is because the baby will automatically get the mother's HCV antibodies and it takes this long before the baby's body is able clear out the mother's antibodies.

Remember.....

- ◆ The risk of passing HCV from an HCV-infected mother to her infant is very low.
- ◆ Breast feeding is considered safe since there is no proof that breast feeding can transmit HCV – but it is recommended that if woman's nipples are cracked and bleeding that she doesn't breastfeed her baby until the nipples heal.
- ◆ Pregnant women **CAN NOT** take ribavirin because it will cause birth defects.
- ◆ HCV positive women should talk with their medical providers if they are thinking about becoming pregnant. Some medical providers will advise a woman to treat HCV before having a child.

www.hcvadvocate.org