



What do Early Intervention Providers need to know about congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV)?

Know your risk when working with infants and toddlers

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a very common virus: approximately 70% of healthy children between 1 and 3 years old will get CMV. Anyone with CMV can transmit the virus in their body fluids. Most people who get CMV do not experience severe symptoms. However, CMV can pose a risk to certain groups such as pregnant people, who can transmit the virus to their unborn babies.

When a baby is born with CMV, this is called congenital CMV. Congenital CMV can cause many health problems. Some children may have hearing loss, vision problems, cerebral palsy, developmental delays, seizures, or other medical issues. If you are pregnant and working with infants or toddlers, you should take precautions such as avoiding contact with urine and saliva and washing your hands before eating. Children born with congenital CMV pose no threat to their peers and no more of a threat to those at risk for CMV infection than would any other child.

Because CMV is so common in young children, places like daycares, preschools, schools, therapy centers, and churches should not ask children to be tested for CMV. Children with CMV should also not be kept out of school or other activities.

How to serve children with congenital CMV

You may already work with children who have congenital CMV. Each child is different and may have their own needs. If a child you work with has hearing loss and the cause is unknown, testing for CMV should be recommended as early as possible. Congenital CMV can be diagnosed when the virus is found in a baby's urine, saliva, blood, or other body fluids in the first three weeks of life. After three weeks, a blood spot card can sometimes help with diagnosis, but it may not give a clear answer.

A clear diagnosis of congenital CMV can help families get the right care. This may include antiviral treatment, early intervention services, and regular hearing checks. Children with congenital CMV are at risk for more hearing loss over time. Babies diagnosed with congenital CMV should have their hearing tested every three months during the first three years of life, and then every six months until age six. Early intervention providers can help families schedule and keep these appointments.

Learn more at www.NationalCMV.org



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