

## Other Things to Consider

Before trying to get a baby, there are important health issues you should discuss with your partner and healthcare provider. Together, you can talk about increasing the chance of your getting a baby while reducing the risk of getting or transmitting HIV. You should talk about the following:

1. Controlling HIV with antiretroviral therapy (ART) decreases the risk of HIV transmission.
2. Screening and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in you and your partner.
3. Improve your general medical health (diabetes, high blood pressure, and/or alcohol and smoking use). These conditions may decrease your ability to get a baby and/or the health of your partner.
4. Adhere to ART for lifelong health.
5. Voluntary medical male circumcision

### Your provider will:

- Review and recommend the best ART regimens for you and/or your partner
- Talk to you about strategies you can use to prevent HIV whilst trying to get a baby.
- Check you and your partner for infections.
- Provide you with condoms for use with all sexual encounters while they assist you in safely getting a baby.



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Adapted from the resources of the Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Center of the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey  
[http://www.fxbcenter.org/resources\\_clinical.html#clinician](http://www.fxbcenter.org/resources_clinical.html#clinician) & the

UCSF HIVE a hub of positive reproductive & social health  
<http://www.hiveonline.org/resources/>

## Thinking of having a baby?



**Advances in prevention and treatment of HIV has provided HIV-affected couples with ways to safely plan and start a family.**

## Why is it important to plan a pregnancy?

Planning a pregnancy improves the health status of you, your partner, and the baby before and after birth.

### Will unprotected sex increase the risk of HIV transmission?

**Yes**, but with education and counseling from your healthcare provider and ART the risk may be reduced.

### When is the best time to try to get a baby?

When you and your partner are healthy. It is recommended that you have 18 months between pregnancies. Your healthcare provider can help you determine the days of your partner's menstrual cycle you are most likely to get pregnant.

### Will my baby have HIV?

The likelihood of your baby having HIV is linked to the HIV status of your partner. It is important to ensure that your partner remains HIV negative to prevent HIV transmission to the baby.

### Should I tell my provider that I want to get a baby?

**Yes!** Tell your healthcare provider that you are thinking about having a baby. Your provider will help you prepare for a healthy and safe pregnancy.

## Whilst trying to get pregnant, what can I do to prevent passing HIV to my partner? Or getting HIV from my partner?

### There are ways to help you get pregnant AND prevent passing or getting the HIV virus!

Talk to your health care provider about:

- Antiretrovirals (ARVs), Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), vaginal insemination, sperm washing, medical male circumcision.

### How should I support my partner before and during pregnancy?

- **Accompany her to antenatal care.** Women who get antenatal care early have healthier babies.
- **Encourage her to take her medications everyday**, exactly as prescribed.
- Support her in attending **all** of her healthcare appointments.
- **Ensure that she eats a healthy diet.** Discuss this with your healthcare provider if you are unsure about what to eat.
- **Always use condoms** when you have sex to protect you, your partner, and your baby from exposure to HIV and other infections.
- **Ensure she does not take any medications** unless her healthcare provider says it's OK; this includes herbal medications.

## Checklist of some things to ask your healthcare provider

- ◇ How can I discuss my desire for a child with my partner?
- ◇ Do my partner and I need to have our fertility tested?
- ◇ Do I have HIV? What is the level of HIV in my blood (i.e. viral load)? CD4 count?
- ◇ Are the HIV medications keeping the viral load down well enough?
- ◇ Do I have any STIs ?
- ◇ Is my partner a candidate for cervical cancer screening ?
- ◇ What are the best options for my partner and I to have a baby?
- ◇ Can you refer me to other resources?

**If you have more questions or would like to discuss the information here in more detail, please contact your healthcare provider.**

