

What is PMTCT?

PMTCT is the Prevention of Mother to Child transmission of HIV. A combination of strategies are used to prevent transmission of HIV to children from HIV positive mothers.



Transmission of HIV from mother to child can be prevented by:

- ▶ planning the pregnancy,
- ▶ booking early for ANC,
- ▶ making sure you are adhering to ART and have a viral load below 1000,
- ▶ giving birth in a health facility with assistance from a trained Health Care Worker,
- ▶ making sure the baby gets exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and prophylaxis to prevent HIV transmission.

How is HIV transmitted from mother to a child?

HIV can be transmitted from an HIV positive mother in three ways:

1. During pregnancy
2. During labour
3. During breastfeeding

While all these times present a risk, the greatest risk for transmission to the baby is during child birth and breastfeeding.

Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission

What are the advantages of exclusive breastfeeding?

Exclusive breast-feeding helps protect the baby against HIV. Also, the baby will be healthier because breast milk contains all the nutrients needed and is more hygienic than most waters.

There are also fewer costs involved as the mother won't have to buy milk substitutes and firewood.

Exclusive breastfeeding also helps to space pregnancies as it can function as a natural contraception.

This holds true as long as the mother's menses/period has not returned.



At six months of age it is safe to introduce mixed feeding such as porridge

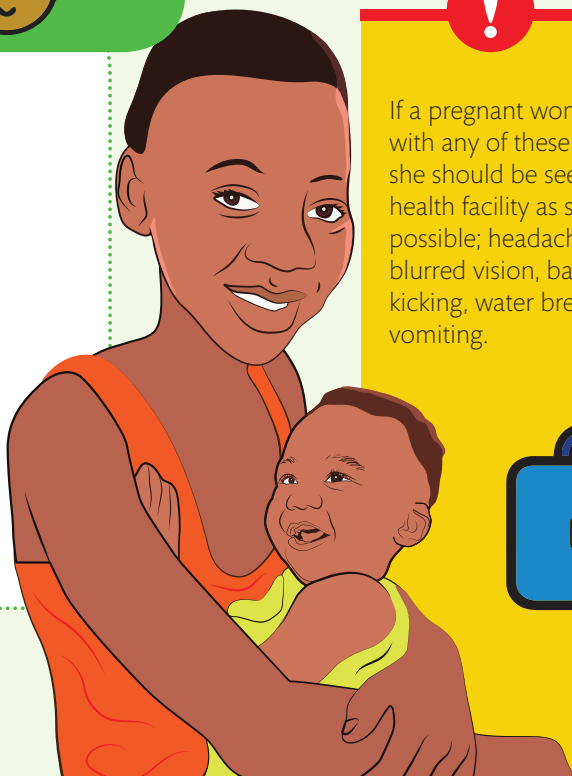


An exposed infant can be tested

- ▶ At birth
- ▶ 6 weeks old
- ▶ 9 months old
- ▶ 3 months after stopping breastfeeding.



This is called Early Infant Diagnosis (EID). If an exposed infant tests HIV positive, they will be initiated on ART. Starting ART early helps to protect the baby from the harmful effects of HIV, protects the immune system and promotes normal growth and development.



If a pregnant woman presents with any of these symptoms, she should be seen at the health facility as soon as possible; headache, bleeding, blurred vision, baby not kicking, water breaking, and vomiting.

