

# MONDAY HEALTH BURST - MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV



Mother to child transmission of HIV or perinatal transmission of HIV is the spread of HIV from a woman living with HIV to her child during pregnancy, labor, delivery or breastfeeding.

With the use of antiretroviral drugs and the increasing knowledge of people on HIV related issues, transmission of HIV from mother to child has greatly reduced. This reduction is due to high rate of drug adherence, which in turn leads to the low amount of viral load in the body (undetectable viral load).

An undetectable viral load is when antiretroviral treatment has brought the level of virus in the body of an infected person to such low levels that blood tests cannot detect it. The risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV during pregnancy and childbirth is lowest when a woman with HIV has an undetectable viral load, but due to the fact that having undetectable HIV virus is never a constant state, it is important to continue taking proper medication and attending regular viral load monitoring appointments.

After birth, it is highly recommended that the mother chooses only one feeding method for her child which is either strictly breastfeeding or formula feeding but not both or neither alternatively as this can predispose the child to a higher risk of getting infected by the virus.

Pregnant women should get tested for HIV before and as soon as she discovers she is pregnant, through voluntary counselling and testing at any Health Centre. This will help reduce the risk of Mother to Child transmission of HIV.

Thank you for joining Centre for Family Health Initiative- Monday Health Burst.

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