

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONCERNS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Working in a childcare or school setting may involve frequent exposure to children infected with communicable diseases. Certain communicable diseases can have serious consequences for pregnant women and their fetuses. It is helpful if women know their medical history (which of the diseases listed below they have had and what vaccines they have received) when they are hired to work in a childcare or school setting. Childcare or school employers should inform employees of the possible risks to pregnant women and encourage workers who may become pregnant to discuss their occupational risks with a health care provider. These women should also be trained on measures to prevent infection with diseases that could harm their fetuses.

The following communicable diseases have implications for pregnant women:

- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Fifth disease (Parvovirus B19)
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (Enteroviral Infections)
- Hepatitis B
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS)
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Varicella-Zoster (Chickenpox and Shingles)

Pregnant women who are exposed to these diseases should notify their health care providers.

All persons who work in childcare or school settings should know if they have had chickenpox or rubella disease or these vaccines. If they are unsure, they should have blood tests to see if they are immune. If they are not immune (never had disease or vaccine), they should strongly consider being vaccinated for chickenpox and rubella before considering or attempting to become pregnant.

Fact sheets for each of the above diseases are included in this section.

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at (612) 543-5230 or call your local health department.

