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CMV (Cytomegalovirus) Positive blood test information

Most healthy children and adults who test positive for Cytomegalovirus (CMV) have no symptoms and may not even know that they have been infected with CMV in the past. CMV causes a mild illness and typically those that have CMV have the following symptoms: fever, sore throat, fatigue, and swollen glands. Since these are also symptoms of other "head cold" like illnesses, most people don't realize that they have been infected with CMV. 80% of the population will test positive for CMV by age 40.

CMV is a virus. It is related to the herpes simplex virus, varicella-zoster virus (which causes chickenpox and shingles), and Epstein-Barr virus (which causes infectious mononucleosis, also known as mono). CMV is a common infection that is usually harmless. Once CMV is in a person's body, it stays there for life. Most of the time the virus is dormant but it can occasionally reactivate, just like chicken pox. When chicken pox reactivates it is called shingles.

CMV is spread by close contact with a person who has **active** virus in his or her saliva, urine, or other body fluids, such as semen. CMV can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her baby during pregnancy if the virus is **active**. In people who test positive for the CMV virus, the virus usually stays dormant, especially in healthy people with normal immune systems. However, in pregnant persons with a weakened immune system the CMV can reactivate and become active. This active virus can then be passed to the baby before birth. If you are healthy and test positive for CMV you have a low chance that you will pass the active virus to your baby. You have less than a 1% chance you will pass CMV to your baby when you are pregnant if your CMV blood test was positive before you became pregnant. Infants and children who become infected after birth rarely have symptoms or problems. About 1% of babies test positive for CMV at birth, however only 1 in 1000 babies that test positive will have problems due to the infection (i.e. you have a 1 in 10,000 chance your baby will get Congenital CMV disease, if your CMV is positive before conceiving).

What happens if I test negative for CMV? If you test negative for CMV you are at risk for getting CMV for the first time during pregnancy and the chance of passing the virus to your baby is much higher than if you have had the disease at least 6 months prior to pregnancy. About 1 to 4 percent of previously uninfected women have a first CMV infection during pregnancy. Among these women there's about a 30 to 50 percent chance that the baby will become infected in the womb. And the chance that the baby will end up with serious health problems from the virus is much higher. There is no drug approved to treat carriers of CMV. Also, currently, there is no available vaccine for preventing CMV disease.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/cmV/overivew.html, or www.mayoclinic.com.