

Stop Maternal Transmission of Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a viral infection. Untreated chronic hepatitis B (CHB) infection is a major cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Babies Born to Infected Mother are the High Risk Group

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) could be transmitted at birth, from the mothers with CHB to their babies by vaginal delivery or Caesarean section. 90% of babies infected with HBV at birth without any preventive measure would develop CHB.

Prevention

Hepatitis B Vaccine

- Regardless of the hepatitis B status of mothers, all newborn babies should receive the birth dose of hepatitis B vaccination in hospital. Afterwards, they should receive the second and third dose of the vaccination at the age of one month and six months respectively.

Hepatitis B Immunoglobulin

- Babies born to mothers with CHB would receive an additional dose of hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) within 24 hours after birth. The chance of developing CHB in these babies receiving HBIG and hepatitis B vaccine would be less than 5%. The risk is higher in pregnant women with high HBV viral load indicated by HBV DNA level in the blood.

Additional Preventive Measure

Antiviral Medication

- Use of antiviral medication starting from the third trimester in mothers with CHB with high viral level.
- Blood test can be done to measure your HBV DNA level. If it is high, mothers may consider the use of tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF), an antiviral medication which can significantly reduce HBV viral level and decrease the chance of HBV transmission to their babies to minimum.

Possible Side Effects of Antiviral Medication

- The reported uncommon side effects with TDF include gastrointestinal upset, headache, dizziness, fatigue, nasopharyngitis, back pain, insomnia, pruritus, skin rash and pyrexia.
- There is no evidence to show that the use of antiviral medication is associated

with increased risk of obstetric complications or congenital anomalies.

Lactating Mother

There is no evidence of HBV transmission as a result of breastfeeding. Although TDF is present in the breast milk at low level, evidence indicates that maternal use of TDF for breast-fed babies is safe. Therefore, breastfeeding should not be affected.

When to Stop Antiviral Medication

Mothers will need medical assessment on the subsequent management of CHB, whether to continue or to stop antiviral medication after delivery.



www.hepatitis.gov.hk

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