Hepatitis B Information for Pregnant Women

What is hepatitis B?

▪ Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by a virus. For many people who get hepatitis B, the virus stays in the body, causing a lifelong illness.
▪ Hepatitis B can cause serious health problems over time, including liver damage, liver failure, and liver cancer.
▪ Most people who have hepatitis B have no symptoms and may not know they have it. But they can still pass hepatitis B to others.

Why should pregnant women get tested?

▪ If a pregnant woman tests positive for hepatitis B, her baby must be treated at birth. Babies who get treatment when they are born rarely get hepatitis B.
▪ When babies become infected with hepatitis B they are very likely to develop a lifelong infection.
▪ Pregnant women should be tested for hepatitis B during every pregnancy.

What should you do if you have hepatitis B and are pregnant?

▪ See your health care provider to discuss how to manage your hepatitis B infection.
▪ There are treatments available that can reduce the risk of passing hepatitis B on to your baby.
▪ If you don't know if you have hepatitis B, ask your provider to order a blood test for hepatitis B.

How can you protect your baby from getting infected?

▪ Get tested for hepatitis B during every pregnancy.
▪ If you test negative for hepatitis B, ask your provider about hepatitis B vaccination.
▪ If you test positive for hepatitis B, your baby will need treatment and follow up:
  ▪ Your baby will receive the first dose of the vaccine series and hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) after birth.
  ▪ Your baby will need to finish the hepatitis B vaccine series.
  ▪ After the vaccine series, your doctor will draw blood to make sure your baby is protected from hepatitis B.
▪ It is safe to breastfeed even if you have hepatitis B.

Minnesota Department of Health
Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program
PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
651-201-5414, 1-877-676-5414
www.health.state.mn.us/hepatitis

2/2016

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414.