



WHAT IS THE POSSIBILITY OF MY PASSING HERPES TO MY CHILD DURING LABOR/DELIVERY?

Five years ago I was diagnosed with herpes and have been fortunate to not have had many outbreaks. Down the road, when I choose to become pregnant, can this STD hurt my newborn during the pregnancy or labor/delivery?

Twenty-five percent of American women have genital herpes. Eighty percent of herpes infections are asymptomatic, and therefore many women do not know that they have been exposed to herpes. If you have your initial herpes infection at the time of delivery and deliver vaginally, your infant has a 40% to 50% risk of being infected. If you have had herpes before and have a herpes recurrence at the time of delivery and deliver vaginally, your infant has a 1 in 2000 chance of being infected. Because of the risk of transmission to your infant, the American College of OB/GYN recommends cesarean section if any herpes lesions are present at the time of your delivery.

If your infant develops herpes at the time of delivery, the consequences can range from asymptomatic disease to severe eye and neurologic injury that may even result in death. Therefore it is very important to inform your obstetrician of your history of genital herpes and to notify him if you notice any lesions or have any symptoms close to the time of delivery.

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