

INFECTIOUS DISEASE SCREENING DURING PREGNANCY

PATHOLOGY SOLUTIONS ARE IN OUR DNA



STAY HEALTHY DURING PREGNANCY

Infections during pregnancy can have adverse effects on both the mother and baby. Certain basic precautions, screening and vaccinations can go a long way to protecting both.



THE FOLLOWING SCREENING TESTS ARE AVAILABLE

Before falling pregnant:

- Rubella antibodies – if rubella antibodies are absent or too low, a rubella vaccine can be administered at least one month before falling pregnant.

Screening during early pregnancy:

- Urine culture in early pregnancy should be performed to screen for bacteria in the urine as this places a pregnant woman at increased risk of pyelonephritis and preterm birth.
- HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B virus and other sexually transmitted infections.

Screening during late pregnancy:

- A vagino-rectal swab should be done at 35-37 weeks of pregnancy to screen for group B streptococcal colonisation. A woman that is colonised with a group B *Streptococcus* may transmit this bacterium to her baby during vaginal delivery. This may lead to neonatal sepsis, which has a very high morbidity and mortality.
- HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B virus and other sexually transmitted infections, if indicated.

REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING VACCINATIONS

- Influenza can cause a severe life-threatening infection in pregnant women. Influenza vaccination is safe at any stage of pregnancy and is recommended by international guidelines.
- Tdap vaccine: Pertussis can cause a life-threatening infection in small babies. There is no pertussis vaccine available at birth. Vaccinating pregnant woman between 27-36 weeks of pregnancy protects the baby through transplacental transfer of antibodies.
- SARS CoV-2 vaccination.



STAY HEALTHY DURING PREGNANCY

- Safe sexual practices
- Do not consume raw eggs, undercooked, raw or processed meat, unpasteurised milk, unpasteurised cheese and unpasteurised fruit juice, raw sprouts and unwashed fresh produce
- Avoid cat litter
- Avoid petting zoos