

Parent to Child Transmission of HIV

Some Facts

- Children mostly get HIV from the mothers. HIV infected mother may transmit HIV during pregnancy, during childbirth and in breastmilk.
- Mixed feeding (breastfeeding along with artificial milk feeding) doubles the chances of transmission of HIV via Breastmilk. In India most of the pregnant women do not know their HIV status. On the other hand, mixed feeding steadily increases in the community from 20% at first month of life to 80% at sixth month. In such a situation HIV infected mother who does not know her status might give mixed feeding increasing transmission risk of HIV.
- Preventable breast problems like mastitis, breast abscess, cracked nipple etc. increase chances of HIV transmission via breastmilk manifolds.
- UN guidelines recognizes HIV positive mothers' right to have an informed choice about feeding options. All information about various feeding options should be available to the mother. If mother/family chooses to give replacement feeds, she should be counseled using AFASS criteria.
- **AFASS**
 - A Acceptable – Is family and community accepts exclusive replacement feeding as a normal practice? Will it be seen as a stigma for HIV infection?
 - F Feasible – Does the family know the correct method to provide replacement feeds to the child?
 - A Affordable – Does the financial position of the family permit exclusive replacement feeding?
 - S Sustainable – Will the family be able to sustain exclusive replacement feeding for the first six months?
 - S Safe – Will the family be able to provide exclusive replacement feeding safely and hygienically?

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