



Office of Children and Family Services

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

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Commissioner

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Dear Provider:

This letter is to inform you about the risks of Cytomegalovirus (CMV), as well preventative measures to protect against the virus. Please read this information carefully.

CMV is a common virus that can affect anyone. While some may experience flu-like symptoms, most who become infected experience no symptoms at all. Fortunately, adults and children rarely have long-term side effects. Although CMV is not highly communicable, it can be spread from person to person by direct contact. Due to the direct care provided in child care settings, child care providers may be at greater risk of contracting CMV. If a woman contracts CMV during pregnancy, the virus can be passed to the developing baby and cause congenital CMV, which may lead to developmental disabilities and other lasting health issues.

Elizabeth's Law went into effect in 2023 and was named in honor of Elizabeth Saunders, a 16-year-old girl who died in 2006 after experiencing a seizure. Elizabeth had a severe case of congenital CMV and, as a result, developed hearing and vision loss, seizures, and cerebral palsy.

Elizabeth's Law requires OCFS to share information with every licensed, registered, or enrolled child care provider and their staff related to the occurrence, transmission, birth defects, methods of diagnosis and preventive measures of CMV. The New York State Department of Health developed resources about CMV including a flier specifically for child care providers, which is attached and is posted on the OCFS website. Please review the document carefully, share it with the adults in your program, and consider posting it as a reminder to staff.

As always, thank you for your dedication to ensuring the health and safety of the people in your program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nora Yates".

Nora Yates
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Child Care Services

What is cytomegalovirus (CMV)?

(pronounced sy-toe-MEG-a-low-vy-rus)

CMV is a common virus that can affect people of all ages. CMV does not cause symptoms in most people. Others may have flu-like symptoms, such as a fever, sore throat, fatigue, and swollen glands.

How is CMV spread?

CMV is spread through bodily fluids, such as urine, saliva, semen, vaginal fluids, tears, breast milk, and blood. People often are infected with CMV while caring for young children.

What is congenital CMV?

When a pregnant person is infected with CMV, they may pass it to their developing baby. A baby born with CMV is said to have congenital CMV. Congenital CMV is the most common infection passed from the pregnant parent to baby in the United States. It is the leading cause of nongenetic hearing loss in newborns.

How do I know if my baby has congenital CMV?

If your baby shows signs of congenital CMV at birth, your baby's health care provider may recommend testing for congenital CMV.

All New York babies have their hearing checked after birth. Your baby may need to have their hearing checked again after you leave the hospital. If so, your baby should also be tested for congenital CMV.

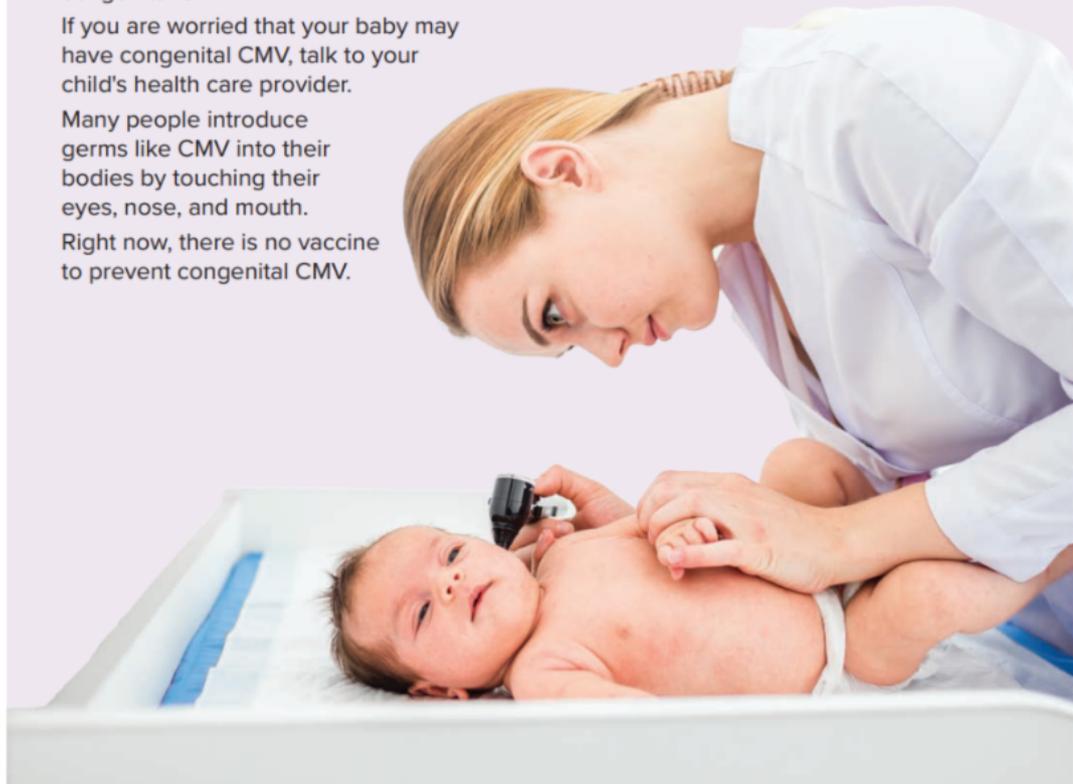
If you are worried that your baby may have congenital CMV, talk to your child's health care provider.

Many people introduce germs like CMV into their bodies by touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.

Right now, there is no vaccine to prevent congenital CMV.

If you are pregnant or you plan to become pregnant, talk to your health care provider to learn more about congenital CMV. Find out what you can do to reduce your risk of infection.

Be sure to wash your hands with soapy water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after touching the saliva or urine of young children.



For People Who Are Pregnant or Who May Become Pregnant



What is congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV)?

(pronounced sy-toe-MEG-a-low-vy-rus) CMV is a virus that can affect people of all ages. It can cause mild, flu-like symptoms but it does not usually make people sick. When a pregnant person is infected with CMV, they may pass it to their developing baby. A baby born with CMV is said to have congenital CMV.

A baby with congenital CMV may develop health problems, like hearing or vision loss, developmental delays, and seizures. They also may be born with a small head.

Some babies with congenital CMV show signs at birth that your baby's doctor can see. Other babies do not show any signs of congenital CMV when they are born.

Hearing loss is the most common sign of a congenital CMV infection. It may be present at birth or it can develop later in life.

How do I know if my baby has congenital CMV?

All newborns in New York State have their hearing tested after birth. This hearing test is quick and painless and can be done while your baby is sleeping. Your baby may need to have their hearing tested again before or after you leave the hospital. If so, your baby's health care provider should test your baby for congenital CMV. This test can be done using your baby's saliva or urine. Test results can show if your baby has a congenital CMV infection that may cause health problems.

Good Hearing Checklist

Birth to 3 Months

- Becomes quiet when around everyday voices or sounds
- Reacts to loud sounds: baby startles, blinks, stops sucking, cries, or wakes up
- Makes soft sounds when awake, baby gurgles

3 to 6 Months

- Turns eyes or head toward sounds, voices, toys that make noise, a barking dog
- Starts to make speech-like sounds: "ga," "ooh," "ba," and p, b, m sounds
- Reacts to a change in your tone of voice

6 to 9 Months

- Responds to soft sounds, especially talking
- Responds to own name
- Understands simple words: "no," "bye-bye," "juice"
- Babbles: "da da da," "ma ma ma,"

9 to 12 Months

- Responds to both soft and loud sounds
- Repeats single words and sounds
- Points to favorite toys or foods when asked

12 to 18 Months

- Uses 10 or more words
- Follows simple spoken directions: "get the ball"
- Points to people, body parts, or toys

18 to 24 Months

- Uses 20 or more words
- Combines two or more words: "more juice," "what's that?"
- Uses many different consonant sounds at the beginning of words: b, g, m
- Listens to simple stories and songs

2 to 3 Years

- Uses sentences with two or three words
- At 2 years, the child's speech is understood some of the time (25%-50%)
- At 3 years, the child's speech is understood most of the time (50%-75%)
- Follows two-step instructions: "get the ball and put it in the box"

Adapted from the California Department of Health Services' checklist.

If you are worried about your baby's development, talk to their health care provider.

Child Care Staff and Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

What You Need to Know



People who work closely with young children may be at greater risk of CMV.

What is cytomegalovirus? *pronounced sy-toe-MEG-a-low-vy-rus*

CMV is a common virus that can affect people of all ages. Most people who are infected have no signs or symptoms – and there are no harmful effects. Others may have flu-like symptoms, such as a fever, sore throat, fatigue, and swollen glands.

Information about pregnancy and congenital cytomegalovirus (cCMV)

For child care staff who are pregnant or who may become pregnant.

When a pregnant person is infected with CMV, they may pass it to their developing baby. A baby born with CMV is said to have congenital CMV. About 1 of every 5 children born with congenital CMV infection will develop permanent conditions. These include hearing loss or developmental disabilities. Healthy infants and children who are infected with CMV after birth rarely have problems.



The best way to help protect babies against CMV, as well as your developing baby, is to follow all the health and infection control procedures already required in child care regulations. These include washing your hands often with soap and water for 15 to 20 seconds:

- before and after diapering and toileting
- before and after feeding a child
- any time you contact bodily fluids, such as saliva and mucus

Caregivers should never share food, drinks, eating utensils, or a toothbrush. Do not put a pacifier in your mouth. Do not kiss a child on or near the mouth or where a child's saliva has been.

Follow health and infection regulations when disinfecting toys, changing tables, and other surfaces.

