

Preventing Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

What is CMV?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus that belongs to the herpes family. It spreads easily through close contact with bodily fluids like saliva and urine—especially from young children, who can carry and pass on the virus for months or even years after infection. Most people who get CMV won't feel sick or may only have mild, cold-like symptoms. However, CMV can pose serious risks for people with weakened immune systems and during pregnancy, when the virus can be passed from parent to baby.

Why Does it Matter in Pregnancy?

When CMV is passed from a pregnant person to their baby, it's called congenital CMV.

Many babies born with congenital CMV won't show symptoms at birth, but some will go on to develop serious and lifelong health conditions. These can include hearing loss, vision problems, developmental delays, and—in rare cases—stillbirth.

CMV is the leading non-genetic cause of permanent hearing loss in children worldwide. It's also the most common infectious cause of disability in babies born in Australia, yet many people have never heard of it.

Ongoing hearing checks and early support are important for babies born with CMV, as hearing loss can appear months or even years after birth.

Prevention Matters

Prevention is key, as CMV can affect unborn babies and young children. Simple precautions can help reduce the risk.

Prevent. Protect. Prepare.

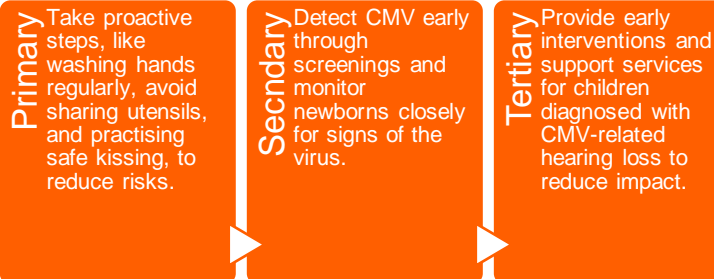
Small Habits. Big Impact.

Simple actions during pregnancy can prevent lifelong impacts from CMV.



Types of Prevention

Although there's no vaccine yet, there are simple, everyday steps you can take to significantly reduce the risk of CMV.



CMV may be common, but prevention is powerful.

Small actions can protect a lifetime of hearing and health.



About this Fact Sheet

We're proud to share this resource in support of **CMV Awareness Month, June 2025**.

This fact sheet draws on expert insights shared during Deafness Forum Australia's Virtual National Deafness Sector Summit, *Protecting Young Ears: Navigating Disease and Medication Risks* held on 15 November 2024.

We encourage you to view the full Summit recording at our website [here](#) or by scanning the following QR code.



The Summit featured two presentations:

1. *Antibiotics & Hearing Loss in Children*, presented by Dr Duaa Gaafar, General Paediatrician & Clinical Pharmacologist from the Royal Children's Hospital | Murdoch Children's Research Institute
2. *Congenital Cytomegalovirus Opportunities for Prevention*, presented by A/Prof Hayley Smithers-Sheedy, MPH, PhD, Principal Research Fellow & Kath Swinburn, MPH, Research Officer & Ethics Governance Manager, Cerebral Palsy Alliance | The University of Sydney. They were joined by disability advocate and devoted mother, Pam Rogers.

This fact sheet has been created for awareness and educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. If you have concerns about your health or your child's health, please speak to a qualified healthcare provider.

The information reflects the expert perspectives and evidence available at the time of the Summit (November 2024). As research and clinical guidance continue to evolve, we recommend checking in with trusted sources and health professionals for the most current advice.

Other CMV Resources

Cerebral Palsy Alliance offers a range of CMV Resources accessible [here](#) or by scanning the following QR code.

