

Infectious Diseases

Please note: The information provided in this section has been sourced from the ARC website and was not created by Ellie's Gift. ARC has been instrumental in supporting the development of Ellie's Gift and their contribution has been significant to the content within our specific TFMR area. ARC were also involved in the focus groups that helped inform and shape the content that has been developed to support families experiencing TFMR.

At your first antenatal appointment you will be offered a blood test for hepatitis B, HIV and syphilis. Knowing about these infections can be helpful in protecting the health of you and your baby.

Testing for hepatitis B in pregnancy

Hepatitis B is a virus that affects the liver. You can have this virus but still feel well. If you have hepatitis B you could pass it on to your baby, which could lead to your baby having liver problems in later life. If the test result shows you have the virus, a course of vaccine will be given to your baby. This is very effective in reducing the risk of liver damage.

Testing for HIV in pregnancy

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a retrovirus that can result in your immune system becoming weakened, making it difficult to fight off infections. If you have HIV there is a risk you could pass it on to the baby. Screening for HIV is offered to all pregnant women. If your healthcare professionals know you have HIV they can take measures to help prevent this happening. They can also offer treatment that can benefit your health.

It can be distressing and worrying to find out in pregnancy that you have HIV. Your result will be confidential to your health care team and they will ensure you are offered support.

Testing for syphilis in pregnancy

Although syphilis is now a rare sexually transmitted disease, it is recommended that you are tested as it can be very harmful to you and your baby. If you are found to have syphilis, you will be given antibiotics which can successfully treat you and your baby.

It can be distressing to find out in pregnancy that you have syphilis. Your result will be confidential to your health care team and they will ensure you are offered support.

Testing for rubella susceptibility in pregnancy

NHS screening programme for rubella susceptibility ceased in England, Scotland and Wales in 2016.

This programme is stopping because rubella is now very uncommon due to the success of the MMR vaccination programme. It is important that we maintain a high level of immunisation. It is possible to have the MMR vaccination at any age, so if you suspect that you, or your children, are not up-to-date with your MMR, contact your GP.

Northern Ireland

Women in Northern Ireland are still screened for rubella susceptibility. It was felt that immunisation levels were not quite as high as the rest of the UK. This is being kept under review.

ARC - Call our helpline

Want to talk? We're here as often as you need us. Our helpline is answered by trained staff.

020 7713 7486

Monday to Friday: 10.00am – 5.30pm

Or text: **07908 683004**

Tuesday and Thursday: 8 – 10pm – email
info@arc-uk.org to arrange an evening call.

Disclaimer

The information contained within this resource was correct and accurate at the time of production, based on the original sources available in **2026**.

Information, guidance, services, contact details and external resources may change over time. Ellie's Gift CIC cannot guarantee that information remains current or that external services, organisations or websites continue to operate as described.

Please check the original source or relevant organisation directly for the most up-to-date information.