

Best Start Resource Centre –
Prenatal Education Program

Prenatal Care

best start
meilleur départ

Resource Centre/Centre de ressources

by/par health **nexus** santé



Importance of Regular Prenatal Care

- Supports healthy pregnancy.
- Prevents and identifies health concerns.
- Provides the opportunity to ask questions and make decisions about your care.
- Links to helpful community services.



Who are Health Care Providers?

- Family Doctors
- Obstetricians
- Registered Midwives
- Nurse Practitioners



Tips for Choosing a Health Care Provider

- Health Care Connect (www.ontario.ca/healthcareconnect)
- Ontario Midwives (www.ontariomidwives.ca)
- Health Care Options near you (www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions)



How Often Should I See my Health Care Provider?

After the first visit you will typically see your health care provider:

- Once a month until 28 weeks of pregnancy.
- Every two weeks until 36 weeks of pregnancy.
- Every week until the baby arrives.



Tips for When you Visit your Health Care Provider

- Write down any questions before your visit.
- Invite your partner or support person to come with you.
- Always ask for a clear answer if you are unsure of what is being said.
- Be an informed decision maker.
- Start thinking about your birth plan.



Early Prenatal Care

Your health care provider will...

- Ask you about your health before pregnancy.
- Take your medical & family history.
- Discuss use of medications.
- Calculate your estimated date of birth.
- Give you a physical exam.
- Ask about your lifestyle and your partner's (nutrition, smoking, alcohol, etc.).
- Ask questions about your emotional health.



Early Prenatal Care

Your health care provider will also...

- Suggest tests and procedures.
- Discuss what you can do to have a healthy baby.
- Ask about your family situation and home environment.
- Answer your questions.
- Provide information about community services.



What to Expect at Every Prenatal Appointment?

- Urine test
- Blood pressure check
- Maternal weight check
- Fundal height check
- Fetal heart rate
- Baby's position



Common Tests Offered During Pregnancy

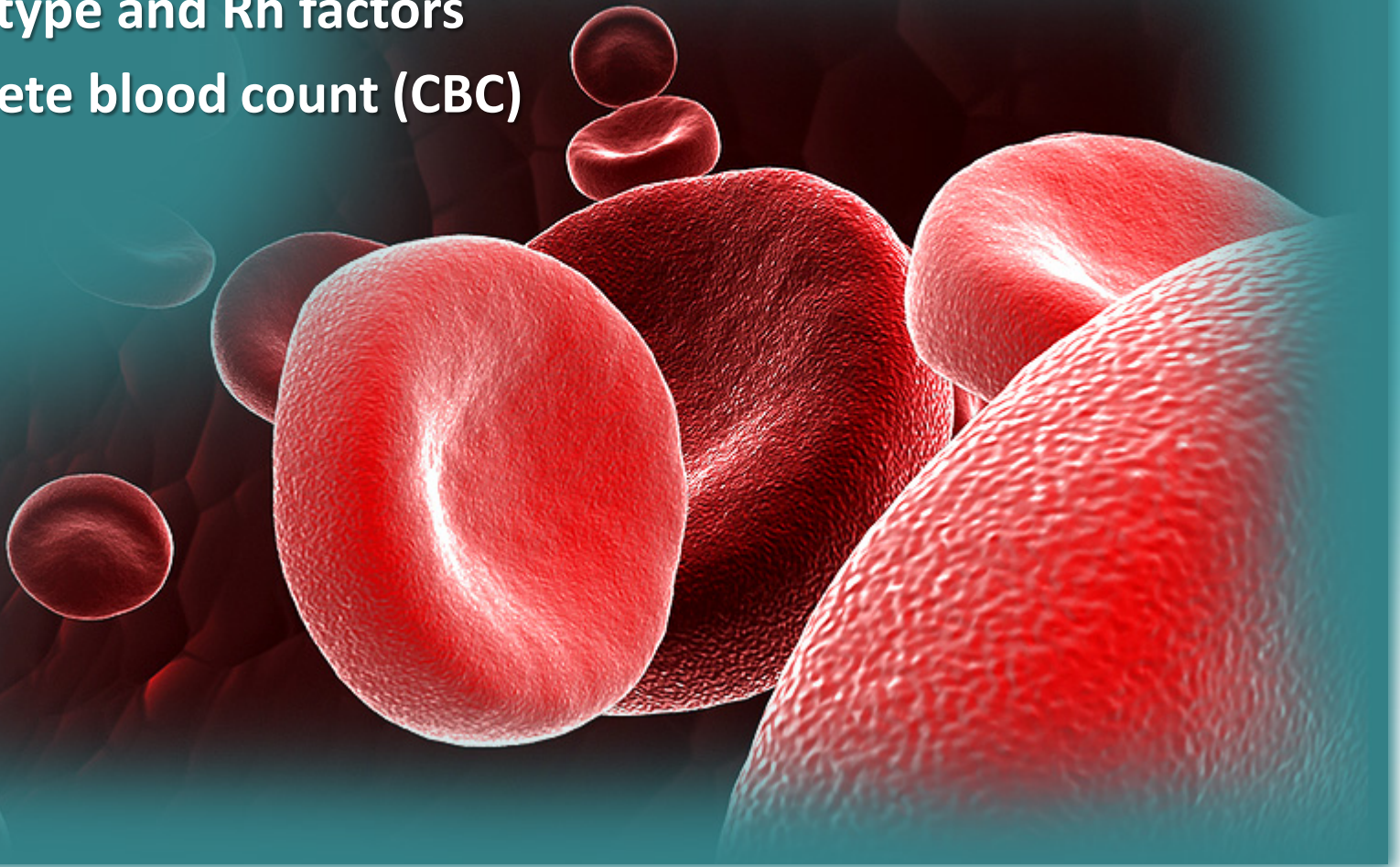
Prenatal testing may be done for **screening** or **diagnostic** purposes

Common Tests

- Blood tests
- Urine tests
- Ultrasound
- Genetic screening
- Counting baby's movements
- Glucose tolerance test
- Vaginal cultures or swabs

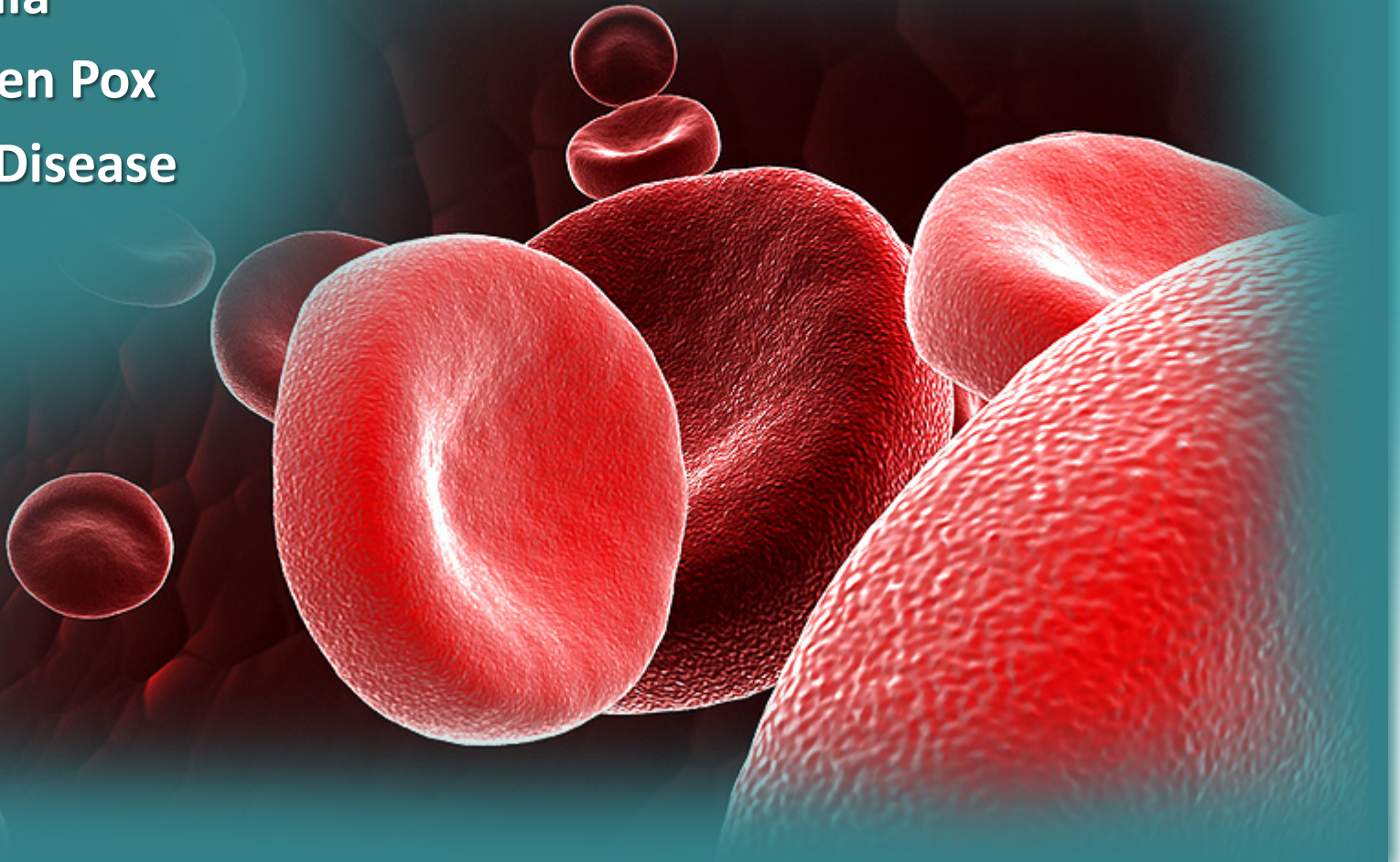
What Information is Provided by Blood Work?

- Blood type and Rh factors
- Complete blood count (CBC)



What Information is Provided by Blood Work?

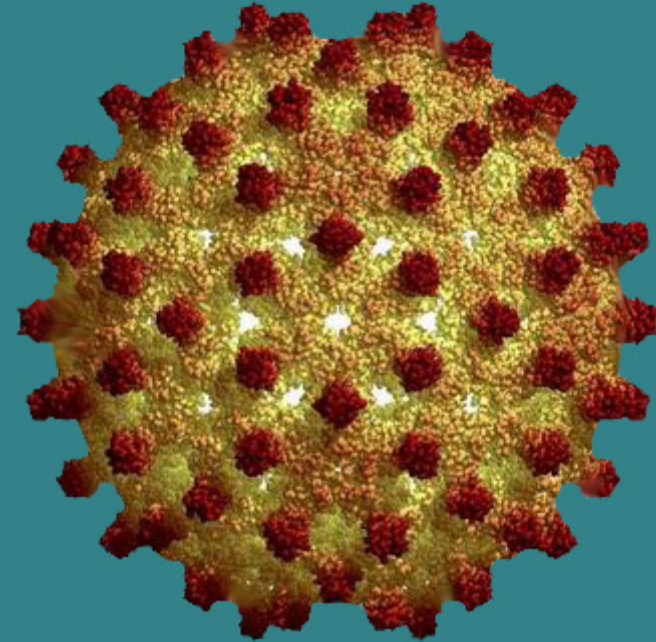
- Rubella
- Chicken Pox
- Fifth Disease



What Information is Provided by Blood Work?

Blood work also identifies:

- Hepatitis B Status

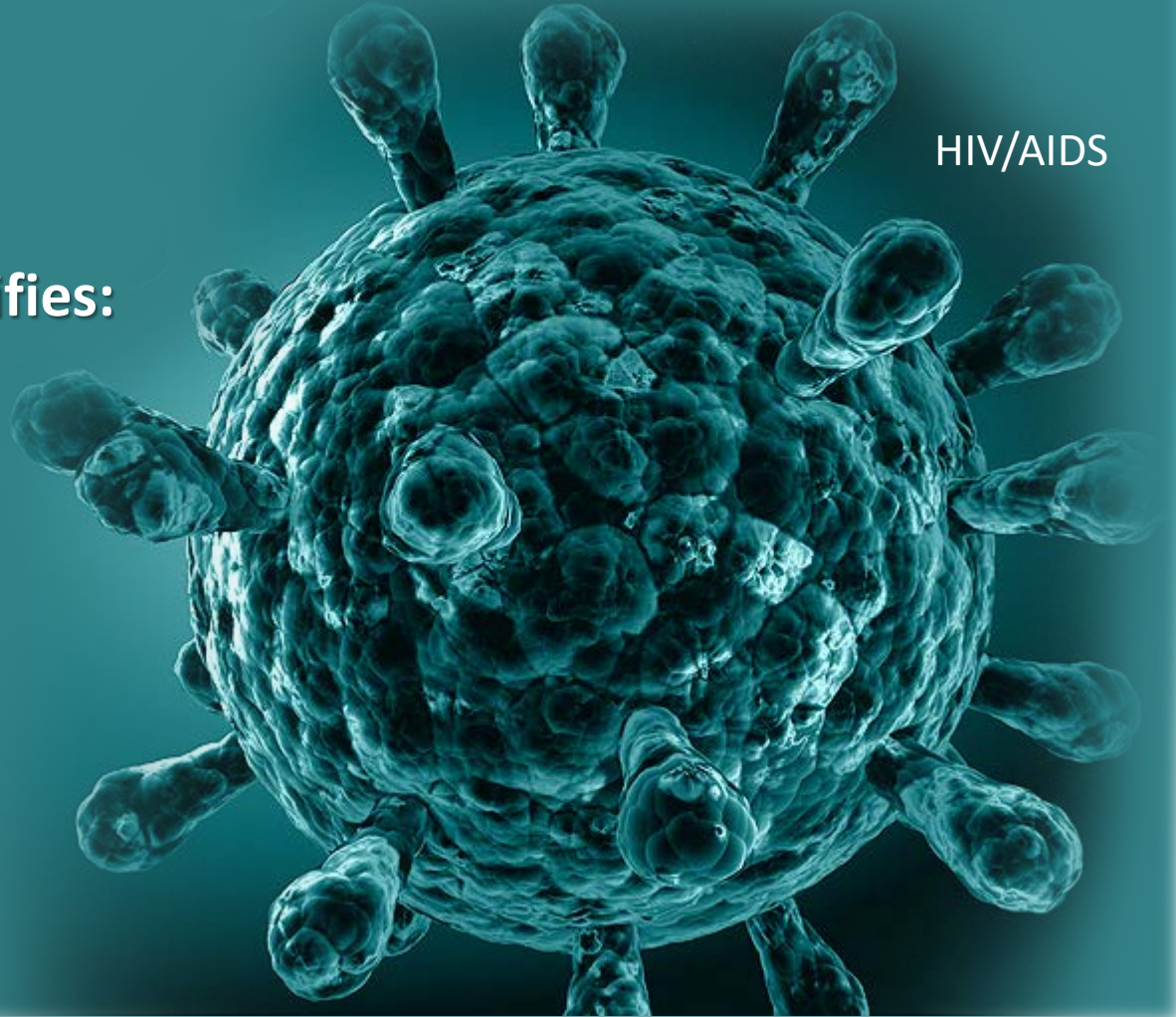


Hepatitis B

What Information is Provided by Blood Work?

Blood work also identifies:

- HIV/AIDS
- VDRL (Syphilis)



HIV/AIDS

What is an Ultrasound?

- A test that converts sound waves to create a picture of your baby on a computer screen.
- Two types of ultrasounds:
 - abdominal ultrasound
 - vaginal ultrasound



Why Your Health Care Provider May Recommend an Ultrasound

- Helps confirm baby's due date.
- Checks out the baby's growth and position.
- Determines the position and condition of the placenta.
- Assesses for abnormalities.
- Helps to determine if you are carrying more than one baby.



How Do You Prepare for an Ultrasound?

- Minimal requirements to prepare.
- May require a “full bladder”.
- Remember to ask questions at time of booking your appointment.



It takes approximately 30 minutes to have an ultrasound.

What are Examples of Genetic Screening Tests?

- *Prenatal genetic screening may test for higher risk of:*
 - Down Syndrome
 - Trisomy 18
 - Open neural tube defects
- *Example: Integrated Prenatal Screening*
 - First blood sample at 11-14 weeks
 - Ultrasound at 11-14 weeks
 - Second blood sample at 15-20 weeks
 - Results available by 16-21 weeks

It is your choice whether or not to have prenatal screening.

Non-Stress Test

- Checks for fetal well-being.
- Indicates how your baby's heart rate changes as he/she moves.
- The baby's heart rate should rise with each movement.
- Usually done after 30 weeks gestation.
- Test takes about 30 minutes to complete.



This test is not routinely indicated for all pregnant women.

Counting Baby's Movements in Late Pregnancy (last 4 weeks)

- Babies' activity levels vary through the day.
- It is best to count movements after a meal.
- Recline in a comfortable position (not flat on your back) with a clock nearby and see how long it takes to count six movements.
- You should feel your baby move throughout the day, every day.
- Contact your health care provider if you do not count six movements in two hours.



Glucose Screening

- A blood test done between 24-28 weeks of pregnancy to determine blood sugar levels.
- If elevated, a longer test, with multiple blood samples, may be recommended (glucose tolerance test).



Group B Streptococcus (GBS)

- This bacteria is often present (up to 45% of women) in your vagina or rectum and can cause infections.
- Detected by a vaginal/rectal swab at around 36 weeks of pregnancy.
- If the swab is positive, it can be treated with antibiotics during labour (not before).
- Not usually serious for mother but can be passed to the baby during childbirth, resulting in mild to severe complications.

Additional info at

www.sogc.org/health/pregnancy-groupb_e.asp

Don't Forget To...

- Write down any important information, including follow-up tests or procedures.
- Know who to call if you have questions or concerns.
- Make your next appointment while you are at the health care provider's office.



Stay informed!

- Make sure you get advice from reliable sources.



For More Information

- Health care provider
- Local public health department
- Pharmacist
- Hospital or birthing centre
- Prenatal education resources
- Certified Doula
- Public library
- Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada – www.pregnancy.sogc.org
- Motherisk - www.motherisk.org



The information represents the best practice guidelines at the time of publication. The content is not officially endorsed by the Government of Ontario. Consult your health care provider for information specific to your pregnancy.



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