

MODERN ART FOR SOUTH AFRICA

ART PREGNANCY & WOMEN'S HEALTH

Everyone with HIV
needs to take HIV treatment
– called antiretroviral
therapy, ART or ARVs

NOVEMBER 2022



**CAN PEOPLE LIVING WITH
HIV HAVE CHILDREN
WITHOUT HIV?**

YES!

ART protects your baby from HIV during pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding.

Talk to your nurse or doctor about it.



IS THE TREATMENT THE SAME FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AS FOR OTHER PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV?

South African guidelines recommend ART for everyone with HIV, whatever their CD4 count or viral load.

This includes pregnant women and women who wish to get pregnant.

There are a few extra things for women to consider when starting or taking ART.

We explain these in this booklet

THE ARV

COMBINATION

IN SOUTH AFRICA

ART is usually three
ARVs in one pill
– called a fixed-
dose combination.



The combination of ARVs used in South Africa is: tenofovir (TDF), lamivudine (3TC) and dolutegravir (DTG). This is sometimes shortened to TLD.

For more information about TLD, read the “Starting ART” leaflet.



DOLUTEGRAVIR & PREGNANCY

Earlier research suggested that there was a slightly higher rate of neural tube defects (NTDs) than normal in babies whose mothers became pregnant on dolutegravir.

But more recent findings show no greater risk.

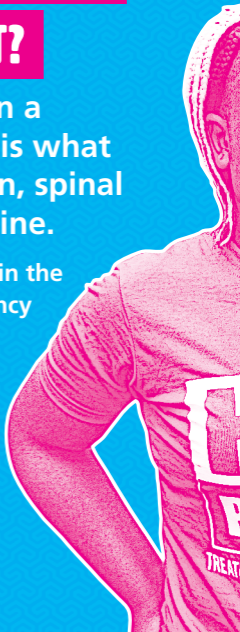


WHAT IS A NEURAL TUBE DEFECT?

The neural tube in a developing baby is what becomes the brain, spinal cord, skull and spine.

The neural tube closes in the first 28 days of pregnancy – that is before most women know they are pregnant.

If it does not fully close for some reason, the baby is said to have a neural tube defect.





Neural tube defects vary, from very minor ones that are easily fixed, to ones that give severe disability and even death.

So, the risk was taken very seriously by the department of health, health workers and patients.

CAN WOMEN LIVING

WITH HIV SAFELY TAKE

DOLUTEGRAVIR?

YES.

All women living with HIV should be told of their options to help them select the appropriate ARV combination with their health worker. For most women this will be a DTG-containing regimen.

WHAT IF I AM

ALREADY

PREGNANT?

If you are already pregnant and taking dolutegravir-based ART, you will be recommended to continue on it.

WHAT IF I

DO NOT WANT TO

FALL PREGNANT?

If you do not wish to become pregnant, and you are using effective contraception, you will be recommended the dolutegravir-based combination.

Effective contraception means a modern method: condoms, oral contraceptives, injectable, implant and IUCD.

WHAT IF I DO

WANT TO BECOME

PREGNANT?

If you plan to become pregnant you should be given all the latest information on dolutegravir and pregnancy.

**MAKE SURE YOU ARE
COMFORTABLE WITH
YOUR DECISION**

This is very important!

It is also important to know that if you decide to have a baby and you are taking dolutegravir and concerned about neural tube defects, you can talk to your health care team about your concerns.





TAKE CARE

OF YOURSELF

Your own health and your own HIV treatment are the most important things to consider for ensuring a healthy baby.



UNDERSTAND

YOUR OPTIONS

Make sure you understand your options – including looking at information like this leaflet.

Make sure your health workers discuss your options with you and respect your decision.





Find out more about treatment
and the free app at:

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