



Dear Colleague:

Pregnant women infected with hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, and syphilis can vertically transmit these infections to their infant(s) at birth. Detection of these infections in pregnancy allows providers to treat infected women to decrease the risk of perinatal transmission, to provide post-exposure prophylaxis to the exposed newborn(s) at birth, and to link infected women to care. The sequelae of these infections in newborns are developmental problems, chronic infections, and sometimes premature death.

The Georgia Department of Public Health amended its regulations in August 2022 to add additional testing requirements that align with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations for prenatal screening. **Georgia Rules and Regulations 511-5-4** now mandates that all pregnant women be tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, and syphilis during each pregnancy.

Key updates to **Rule 511-5-4** include:

- **Addition of hepatitis B testing to the standard screenings for pregnant women**
 - HBV test at initial prenatal visit
 - HBV test at delivery for women not tested prenatally, or with signs or symptoms of HBV, or at high risk for HBV
- **Addition of hepatitis C testing to the standard screenings for pregnant women**
 - HCV test at initial prenatal visit
 - HCV test during the third trimester if the woman has known or potential exposure to HCV
 - HCV test at delivery for women not tested prenatally

Georgia law requires all Georgia physicians, laboratories, and other health care providers to report patients with these infections to the Georgia Department of Public Health (**Georgia Code O.C.G.A. § 31-12-2**). Both laboratory confirmed and clinical diagnoses are reportable within the specified time intervals.

As commissioner and as a physician, I urge you to make hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, and syphilis testing part of your routine prenatal care – not just because it is mandated, but for the health and well-being of every mother and infant in Georgia. If you have any questions, please contact your local health office, or call the Georgia Department of Public Health at 1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584).

Thank you for all that you do to help protect the lives of all Georgians.

Sincerely,

Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner and State Health Officer

Additional resources:

[2021 STD Treatment Guidelines](#)

[DPH disease reporting](#)