Protect Your Baby from Chagas Disease

Chagas disease is an illness that can lead to serious heart and stomach problems, and even death. Chagas disease can be life threatening even though you may not feel sick now. In fact, people usually don't feel sick until many years after they have been infected.

Who can get Chagas disease?

Anyone. However, people have a much greater chance if at some point in their lives they have:

- Lived in rural areas of Mexico, Central America, or South America
- Stayed in a house in Mexico, Central America, or South America with walls that have cracks or crevices
- Seen this bug

How can someone get Chagas disease?

People usually get Chagas disease from contact with a triatomine bug (also called "kissing bug"). However, there are other ways the disease can be spread, including from an infected mother to her unborn baby.

What should I do if I think I might have Chagas disease?

If you think you might have Chagas disease, you should see your OB/GYN or other health care provider, who will examine you. He or she may take a sample of your blood for testing.

If I have Chagas disease, does it mean my baby is infected?

No, not necessarily. The risk of an infected mother spreading Chagas disease to her unborn baby is less than 1 in 10.

If I have Chagas disease, should my baby be tested?

Yes. If you have been told you have Chagas disease, all of your children should be tested, regardless of their ages.

Is there treatment for Chagas disease?

Yes, there is treatment for the disease. Your baby can be treated any time after birth, and treatment is very effective for newborns and children. You can be treated after your baby is born and you have finished breastfeeding.

Many people who have tested positive are leading healthy lives with the help of their health care providers.

For more information on Chagas disease, please visit www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas or call **404.718.4745.**

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