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## *49 pregnant mums found HIV-positive during screening*

SINCE December 2004, when HIV testing during pregnancy was made routine, 49 women have been found to have the deadly virus during antenatal screening.

Two of these women passed on the illness to their babies, the Ministry of Health (MOH) told The Straits Times.

Dr Anita Menon, an infectious diseases expert at the KK Women's and Children's Hospital, said the risk of HIV transmission from mothers to infants can be cut from about 25 to 40 per cent to less than 2 per cent if expectant mothers take preventive measures.

The HIV-positive woman has to take anti-retroviral medication during her pregnancy and delivery of her child to prevent the virus from spreading to the baby.

She should not breastfeed her baby and the newborn has to take anti-retroviral medication for the first six weeks of his life.

**THERESA TAN**

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