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Toxoplasmosis & Pregnancy

What is Toxoplasmosis?

- An infection caused by a parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*.
- Can cause severe illness in infants when mothers are infected just before or during pregnancy.
- Treatment is available if infected while pregnant.

How is Toxoplasmosis spread?

- **Cat feces** - Cats can become infected with the parasite by eating infected rodents, birds, or other small animals.
 - May be spread by touching your mouth after cleaning litter box
- **Fruits and vegetables** - May have contact with contaminated soil or water. Important to wash produce prior to eating.
- **Eating raw undercooked meat from animals that were infected with Toxoplasma**
- **From pregnant person to unborn child**

Symptoms of Toxoplasmosis

- People with healthy immune systems usually have little to no symptoms. May feel like flu symptoms: swollen lymph glands and muscle aches and pain that last for several weeks or more.
- Most infants show no symptoms at birth, although many are likely to develop symptoms later in life. These include mental disability, seizures, and vision loss.

How do I know if I have Toxoplasmosis?

- Blood draw to check for antibodies to *Toxoplasma*.

How to protect you and your baby from Toxoplasmosis:

- Avoid changing cat litter. If no one else can perform the task, wear disposable gloves and wash your hands with soap and water afterwards.
- Cat litter should be replaced daily. The parasite becomes infectious within 1-5 days in the cat's feces.
- Feed cat dry or canned food - avoid raw or undercooked meats.
- Keep cat indoors
- Avoid stray cats. Do not get a new cat during pregnancy.
- Cover outdoor sandboxes.
- Use gloves while gardening to avoid soil or sand that may be contaminated by cat feces.
- Wash hands after contact with sand or soil



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https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/toxoplasmosis/gen_info/pregnant.html