

Child Health and Safety NewsletterHerpes Awareness

Issue 33 January 2018

This newsletter is designed to raise awareness of the work of the Child Death Overview Panel for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

When it comes to public awareness, herpes has a pretty low profile.

Following the deaths of babies locally the purpose of this months newsletter is to raise awareness of the herpes virus during and after pregnancy.

Herpes is highly contagious and caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV). It is spread by skin-to-skin contact, breastfeeding, during vaginal, oral or anal sex – or even just a kiss.



Herpes can be transmitted during labor, and delivery is the biggest concern with genital herpes during pregnancy. The risk is greatest if you get genital herpes for the first time in the third trimester.

If you are pregnant and have had genital herpes at any point in your life, tell your doctor or midwife.

Medication may be prescribed to prevent an outbreak, or delivery by caesarean section recommended if the herpes occurred for the first time in the last six weeks of pregnancy.



www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk





10% of cases of newborn herpes are contracted after birth, and it can be just as dangerous as herpes transmitted during labor.

- Always make sure people wash their hands before touching your baby
- Never let anyone with a cold sore kiss, nuzzle or even hold your baby (any kind of herpes can be dangerous for a newborn, including the kind that causes cold sores). 85 per cent of the population carry the virus and may not have shown any symptoms of this ever.

Before three months a baby cannot fight the virus and this can lead to liver and brain damage, and even death. The virus can be hard to detect, early signs include a baby not feeding, drowsiness, fever, floppiness and unusual crying.

HSV is most virulent when the skin is broken.

For further information take to your midwife or gp. Useful links to identifying if your baby is ill:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/spotting-signs-serious-illness/?>

Or Baby Check App on The Lullaby Trust App

