

high prevalence of these infections in India, ramping up screening would be extremely beneficial in treating the infected individuals in a timely manner and preventing transmission to others, including parent to child transmission. This is in line with our National PPTCT programme, which includes the following principles: Primary prevention of HIV, especially among women of child bearing age, preventing unintended pregnancies among women living with HIV, preventing HIV transmission from pregnant women infected with HIV to their child, and providing care, support and treatment to women of child bearing age living with HIV, her children and family. Once diagnosed, appropriate diligent follow-up and treatment is essential to improve quality of life of the affected individuals and their families. All HIV infected pregnant women (irrespective of CD4 count/Clinical stage) should receive lifelong ART. This treatment serves two key purposes:

1. Improves health and prolongs survival of the mother.
2. Reduces the risk of HIV transmission from mother-to-child during pregnancy, labour, delivery, and throughout the breastfeeding period.

ART should be started as soon as possible and continued throughout pregnancy, delivery, breast feeding period and thereafter lifelong

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