

More Gauteng babies born HIV negative



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This is an improvement from an average of 70 percent in previous months. The department said that 91 percent of babies whose mothers were on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) were tested six weeks after birth and tested HIV negative. With the new ARV guidelines that were implemented in all public health facilities in Gauteng offering anti natal care services since April this year, the province hopes to further reduce the mother to child transmission rate, said department in a statement.

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According to the new guidelines announced by President Jacob Zuma during last year's World AIDS Day, antiretroviral prophylaxis is given at 14 weeks of pregnancy for those women who have a CD4 count above

350, while those with a CD4 count of 350 and below are eligible for treatment.

In an effort to eliminate the transmission of HIV from mother to child, the province has called on all pregnant women to go for anti-natal visits as soon as they suspect that they are pregnant so they can do all the necessary tests on time and be put on treatment if necessary.

"The department's aim is that no child should be born HIV positive in Gauteng by the end of this financial year, and in order to achieve this, we urge mothers who suspect that they might be pregnant to present themselves early at anti-natal clinics and take the HIV test," said Gauteng Health and Social Development MEC Qedani Mahlangu

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