

## Toxoplasmosis and pregnancy: screening and prevention

Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by the *Toxoplasma gondii* parasite. It generally causes no symptoms and is not contagious<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, during pregnancy, this infection can be a risk factor for the fetus.

If you are planning to get pregnant or are already expecting, toxoplasmosis screening tests will be recommended to you. Screening consists in testing your blood for specific antibodies – anti-*Toxoplasma* immunoglobulins – produced by your body in response to this infection<sup>2,3</sup>.

Before your pregnancy, if these antibodies are detected in your blood, it means you are immune to toxoplasmosis. In this case, no special measures are necessary during pregnancy, because you are no longer at risk for infection. However, a negative blood test result means no antibodies were found in your blood; you have never been in contact with the toxoplasmosis parasite<sup>3,4</sup>. Certain screening and prevention measures will be necessary and recommended in the event of pregnancy, to avoid all risk of infection.

Starting from your first prenatal visit up to the birth, blood tests will be prescribed to you each month to verify the absence of infection. In addition, everyday preventive measures involving basic hygiene will be recommended to you<sup>3</sup> to avoid all possible contamination.

Toxoplasmosis can be present in different forms in meat or the excrements of certain animals, particularly cats. Scrupulous hand washing with soap and water, especially after handling raw meat or fruits and vegetables with soil on them, is crucial. Any meat you consume should be cooked at a temperature of over 68°C. It is also important to carefully wash raw produce and avoid eating it outside the home.

If you contract toxoplasmosis during your pregnancy, your gynecologist will advise you in getting the appropriate care. Once the diagnosis has been confirmed and the infection analyzed, you and your baby will receive the antibiotics best suited to your condition<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ameli.fr/assure/sante/themes/toxoplasmose/definition-symptomes-complications-possibles>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ameli.fr/assure/sante/themes/toxoplasmose/diagnostic-traitement>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.has-sante.fr/portail/upload/docs/application/pdf/2009-12/depistages\\_prenatals\\_obligatoires\\_synthese\\_vf.pdf](https://www.has-sante.fr/portail/upload/docs/application/pdf/2009-12/depistages_prenatals_obligatoires_synthese_vf.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ameli.fr/assure/sante/themes/toxoplasmose/bons-reflexes-cas-faut-consulter>