

## Is treatment available?



Women who become infected during pregnancy can be treated with medications. Mother and baby should be monitored closely during the pregnancy and after the baby is born. See your health care provider if you have questions about toxoplasmosis.

## The best way to protect your unborn child is by protecting yourself against toxoplasmosis.

- Wash your hands with soap and water after any exposure to soil, sand, raw meat, or unwashed vegetables.
- Cook your meat completely (no pink should be seen and the juices should be clear). The internal temperature of the meat should reach 160°F.
- Do not sample meat until it is cooked.
- Freeze meat for several days before cooking to greatly reduce the chance of infection.
- Wash all cutting boards and knives thoroughly with hot soapy water after each use.
- Wash and/or peel all fruits and vegetables before eating them.
- Wear gloves when gardening or handling sand from a sandbox. Wash hands well afterward.
- Avoid drinking untreated water, particularly when traveling in less developed countries.

## Do I have to give up my cat if I am pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant?

No, you do not have to give up your cat if you are pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant. Follow these helpful tips to help you reduce your risk of exposing yourself to *Toxoplasma*:

- Have someone else change the litter box if possible. If you have to change it, wear disposable gloves and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water afterwards.
- Change the litter box daily because the parasite does not become infectious until 1 to 5 days after it is shed in the feces.
- Feed your cat commercial dry or canned food.
- Never feed cats raw meat because this can be a source of *Toxoplasma* infection.
- Keep indoor cats indoors.
- Avoid stray cats, especially kittens.
- Cover your outdoor sandboxes.
- Do not get a new cat while you are pregnant.

Toxoplasmosis also affects persons with weakened immune systems. For more information about toxoplasmosis, contact your health care provider, veterinarian, or local health department.

Also, visit the CDC website at:  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/toxoplasmosis](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/toxoplasmosis)

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# Toxoplasmosis: An Important Message for Women



