

Dear Shawn,

You had asked me if there are any special precautions you need to be aware of in the care of little Mellissa. As Mellissa was infected with HIV in utero, you will need to closely monitor her health.

Mellissa needs all the same things other children need; love, affection, hugs and kisses, but she also requires special care. It is important that you have a close relationship with her pediatrician and Mellissa's specialists. There are also some extra precautions that you should be taking. \*

- “Watch for breathing problems, fever, unusual sleepiness, diarrhea, or changes in how much the child eats. Talk to the child's doctor about what else to look for and when to report it.
- Talk to the doctor before the child gets any immunizations (including oral polio vaccine) or booster shots. Some vaccines could make the child sick. No child with HIV or anyone in the household should ever take oral polio vaccine.
- Stuffed and furry toys can hold dirt and might hide germs that can make the child sick. Plastic and washable toys are better. If the child has any stuffed toys, wash them in a washing machine often and them as clean as possible.
- Keep the child away from litter boxes and sandboxes that a pet or other animal might have been in.
- Ask the child's doctor what to do about pets that might be in the house.
- Try to keep the child from getting infectious diseases, especially chickenpox. If the child with HIV infection gets near somebody with chickenpox, tell the child's doctor right away. Chickenpox can kill a child with AIDS.
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I would strongly recommend that you also do your own research (do lots of reading) and find a close-knit support group for parents of children with HIV or AIDS. Your doctor should be able to recommend a support group in your area.

Your long time friend,

Margie,  
Registered Nurse

\* Tips taken from HIVpositive.com May 2005