



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John W. Mannion

Common Virus That Could Cause Birth Defects Will Now Be Screened For

THE MESSENGER October 2, 2023

| ISSUE: **ELIZABETH'S LAW, MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH, HEALTHY BABIES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

While many people will be infected with CMV, only few will be affected

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The New York State Department of Health will begin screening all newborn babies in the state for congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV), a virus that is the most common infectious cause of birth defects in America.

The new policy, which goes into effect Monday, will add screening for CMV to the regular tests a baby undergoes when born. For at least the first year, testing will be free for parents.

CMV is a lifelong and very common infection, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reporting that more than half of adults will be infected by age 40. Most people with CMV will have no symptoms and may not even know they have it unless they have a weakened immune system.

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The Mayo Clinic warns that congenital CMV is also linked to premature birth, low birth weight, jaundice, poorly functioning livers, rashes and skin splotches, an enlarged spleen, seizures or pneumonia. In some cases, symptoms will not appear for years, before a child later suffers hearing or vision issues.

“CMV is a serious threat to newborn health, but it's also preventable,” state Sen. John Mannion (D), said in a statement.