Children with HIV start puberty later than other children. HIV medications may help children with HIV to start puberty at a more typical age.

**What we wanted to know**
We looked at when puberty began in children with HIV compared to children without HIV. We also looked to see if there was a link between taking certain HIV medicines and when puberty began.

**Who we studied**
We looked at 2,539 children born to mothers with HIV.
- 2,086 children had HIV
- 453 children did not have HIV

**What we did**
We used doctors’ reports of the girls and boys in our study. We looked at:
- For girls, whether their breasts or pubic hair had started growing
- For boys, the growth of their penis and testicles or pubic hair

**What we found**

**Children without HIV were similar to U.S. children in general.**
- They started puberty at 9½ to 10½ years old, on average.
- Black children usually started puberty earlier than white children.

**Children with HIV had delays in puberty.**
- They started puberty 6 to 11 months later than the children without HIV.
- Children with worse HIV disease started puberty 4 -12 months later, on average, than healthier children with HIV.
- In the last decade, children on combination therapy* usually started puberty earlier than children not taking this therapy.

*Combination therapy is three or more drugs from two or more different HIV drug classes.

**What we learned**
- Children with HIV usually start puberty later than children without HIV.
- Children with the worst (or most advanced) HIV disease start puberty the latest.
- Combination therapy for HIV may help children start puberty at a more typical age.

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Reference Info:
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