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Second US baby is HIV-free after early treatment

WASHINGTON: A baby treated for HIV within hours of birth is free of the virus nearly a year later, in the second case that has raised hopes about early treatment, doctors said.

The approach mirrored that taken for a Mississippi baby, who has been off treatment for 21 months and still has no detectable virus in her system.

The latest research on the two young girls was presented at the annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Boston.

The newest case involves a Los Angeles baby who was born to a mother infected with HIV and who had not been taking her medications, making her at high risk for transmission, said Yvonne Bryson, chief of pediatric infectious diseases at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Audra Deveikis, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Miller Children's Hospital Long Beach, where the baby was born, tested the infant and gave her high, treatment-level doses of antiretroviral drugs before even knowing if she was

HIV-positive, Bryson told AFP by phone from the conference.

"The way it works is you test and you treat before you know the results because it takes several days to get the results," explained Bryson, a consultant on the case.

Treatment started at four hours of age, even earlier than the Mississippi child.

Eventually, the tests came back positive for HIV.

But by six days of age, the virus was undetectable. "The remarkable thing about this particular baby is that the virus disappeared so quickly," said Bryson. - AFP