

Pregnancy and Vaccination



Information for pregnant women

Vaccines help protect you and your baby against serious diseases.



You probably know that when you are pregnant, you share everything with your baby. That means when you get vaccines, you aren't just protecting yourself—you are giving your baby some early protection too. You should get a flu shot and whooping cough vaccine (also called Tdap) during each pregnancy to help protect yourself and your baby.

Whooping Cough Vaccine

Whooping cough (or pertussis) can be serious for anyone, but for your newborn, it can be life-threatening. Up to 20 babies die each year in the United States due to whooping cough. About half of babies younger than 1 year old who get whooping cough need treatment in the hospital. The younger the baby is when he or she gets whooping cough, the more likely he or she will need to be treated in a hospital. It may be hard for you to know if your baby has whooping cough because many babies with this disease don't cough at all. Instead, it can cause them to stop breathing and turn blue.

When you get the whooping cough vaccine during your pregnancy, your body will create protective antibodies and pass some of them to your baby before birth. These antibodies will provide your baby some short-term, early protection against whooping cough.

Learn more at www.cdc.gov/pertussis/pregnant/.

Flu Vaccine

Changes in your immune, heart, and lung functions during pregnancy make you more likely to get seriously ill from the flu. Catching the flu also increases your chances for serious problems for your developing baby, including premature labor and delivery. ***Get the flu shot if you are pregnant during flu season—it's the best way to protect yourself and your baby for several months after birth from flu-related complications.***

Flu seasons vary in their timing from season to season, but CDC recommends getting vaccinated by the end of October, if possible. This timing helps protect you before flu activity begins to increase.

Find more on how to prevent the flu by visiting www.cdc.gov/flu/.

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Keep Protecting Your Baby after Pregnancy

Your ob-gyn or midwife may recommend you receive some vaccines right after giving birth. Postpartum vaccination will help protect you from getting sick and you will pass some antibodies to your baby through your breastmilk. Vaccination after pregnancy is especially important if you did not receive certain vaccines before or during your pregnancy.

Your baby will also start to get his or her own vaccines to protect against serious childhood diseases. You can learn more about CDC's recommended immunization schedule for children and the diseases vaccines can prevent at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/.

Keep in mind that many diseases rarely seen in the United States are still common in other parts of the world. Talk to your ob-gyn or midwife about vaccines if you are planning international travel during your pregnancy. More information is available at www.cdc.gov/travel/.

Even before becoming pregnant, make sure you are up to date on all your vaccines. This will help protect you and your child from serious diseases. For example, rubella is a contagious disease that can be very dangerous if you get it while you are pregnant. In fact, it can cause a miscarriage or serious birth defects. The best protection against rubella is MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine, but if you aren't up to date, you'll need it before you get pregnant.

Talk to your ob-gyn or midwife about maternal vaccines and visit: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy/



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