

Flu Prevention Mother and Baby

- ☑ The best way to prevent flu is to get a flu shot every year.
- ☑ Pregnant women should get the flu shot at any time during their pregnancy.
- ☑ All household contacts and caregivers need their flu shots to prevent spreading flu to you and your baby.



- ☑ Wash your hands frequently, especially after being at work and in public places.
- ☑ Avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth until after you have washed your hands.
- ☑ Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- ☑ Cover your coughs and sneezes with your arm or tissue.
- ☑ If you have flu symptoms, or had recent contact with someone with flu, call your OB provider promptly.
- ☑ Plan to breastfeed your baby for 6 months. Breastfed babies do not get as sick - and are less sick from flu - than babies not breastfed.
- ☑ Your baby relies on you for protection. Keep your baby away from sick people and crowds. Your baby can get his/her own flu shot at 6 months of age.

The flu shot is recommended in pregnancy by the following national health organizations

American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College), American Medical Association (AMA), American Nurses Association (ANA), Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), March of Dimes, National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID), National Influenza Vaccine Summit (NIVS), American Pharmacists Association (APhA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Talk to your midwife, physician, or other prenatal provider about the flu shot and where you can get it.

Resources

BabyCenter http://www.babycenter.com/0_flu-during-pregnancy_10313151.bc

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/pregnant.htm>

Hayes, CE. (2008) Prevention of Influenza. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*, (53)3, 268-271.

Meharry PM, Cusson RM, Stiller R, Vázquez M. Maternal Influenza Vaccination: Evaluation of a Patient-Centered Pamphlet Designed to Increase Uptake in Pregnancy. *Matern Child Health J*. 2013 Sep 22.

Benowitz, Esposito, Gracey, Shapiro, and Vázquez. Influenza Vaccine Given to Pregnant Women Reduces Hospitalization Due to Influenza in Their Infants. *Clin Infect Dis*. Dec 15, 2010; 51(12): 1355–1361. doi: 10.1086/657309 PMID: PMC3106242

Zaman, K, Roy,E, Arifeen,SE, Rahman,M, Raqib,R, Wilson,E, Omer,S Shahid,N Breiman,RF and Steinhoff, MC Effectiveness of Maternal Influenza Immunization in Mothers and Infants. *N Engl J Med* 2008; 359:1555-1564 October 9, 2008DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa0708630

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Influenza In Pregnancy

One flu shot protects you and your baby



A “two-for-one” benefit

Influenza (Flu)

Flu during pregnancy can put you and your baby at risk for severe illness. Flu is a common respiratory illness caused by a virus that infects your nose, throat, and lungs. This pamphlet describes the risk of flu to mother and baby and ways to prevent it:

- ❖ *Threat of flu*
- ❖ *Flu during pregnancy*
- ❖ *Flu and your baby*
- ❖ *Flu shot - “TWO-for-ONE”*
- ❖ *Flu shot safety*
- ❖ *Prevention of flu*

Flu Spread

Flu spreads by droplets released when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or breathes on you.

Infected droplets may also land on shared surfaces like doorknobs or phones. If you touch the infected surface and then touch your nose, eyes, or mouth you could get the flu.

Exposure to Flu Virus

The time between the exposure to the flu and the start of symptoms is 1-3 days. It is possible for someone to pass the flu virus onto you before that person knows they have flu!

Symptoms of Flu

The main symptoms of flu are fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches, and extreme tiredness. Symptoms can be more severe and may last longer during pregnancy.

Flu, You, and Your Unborn Baby

- ❖ Your immune system protects you against infections; however during pregnancy your immune system is not as strong as it changes in response to the baby.
- ❖ As a pregnant woman you are at an increased risk of severe illness from flu.
- ❖ Flu infection may also lead to premature birth of your baby.



- ❖ Even if you are healthy, never get sick, or never had the flu, your pregnant body is still less able to fight off flu.
- ❖ If you have asthma, diabetes, or are significantly overweight your risk of severe flu illness is even higher.
- ❖ Complications for both you and your baby from flu occur in every trimester and up to 2 weeks postpartum.

Flu and Your Baby

- ❖ Infants under 6 months of age have the highest rates of hospitalization from flu among US children.
- ❖ Infants born to mothers who get the flu shot during pregnancy are less likely to be hospitalized with flu.
- ❖ When YOU have the flu shot during pregnancy, within 2 weeks you develop antibodies to protect you, and your baby after birth, a “TWO-for-ONE” benefit.

Flu Shot Safety

All women who are pregnant during the flu season should have the flu shot. Discuss the scientific facts about flu and the flu shot with a health care professional you can trust.



For more than 50 years, flu shots have been given to millions of pregnant women and they have not been shown to cause harm to mother or baby.

If you had an allergic reaction to a prior flu shot, or are allergic to eggs, you should not have the vaccine.

If you prefer the preservative-free flu shot ask your prenatal provider for the thimerosal-free flu shot.

You cannot get flu from the flu shot. The flu shot is an inactivated vaccine (killed virus) and therefore cannot give you the flu.