

Vaccines for Women

Vaccines can protect you against certain diseases. Most vaccines are given by injections (shots), but a few can be taken by nose, in a spray. The shot or nasal spray you get is called a vaccine.

Should I get vaccines if I am pregnant?

All pregnant women should get the Tdap (whooping cough) and flu vaccine in each pregnancy. Some vaccines should not be given to pregnant women. These include human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine; nasal spray flu vaccine; measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR); and varicella vaccine (chickenpox). Right after pregnancy is a good time to get the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine, varicella vaccine, or the hepatitis vaccines if you need them.

What types of vaccines do I need?

The table on the next page shows which vaccines you may need as a woman. If you work or travel outside the United States, you may also need other vaccines. Hepatitis B and hepatitis A vaccines are also recommended for women at risk for these infections. Ask your midwife or health care professional which vaccines are recommended for your unique situation.

Are vaccines safe?

- Vaccines are safe and provide the best protection available against a number of serious diseases.
- Most vaccines used in the United States are made from a killed or inactive virus or bacteria, so the vaccines cannot give you the disease.
- Side effects from vaccines are usually minor and temporary, such as feeling sore where you get the shot

or a slight fever, which go away in a few days. Serious and long-term effects are rare.

- Ask your midwife or health care professional which vaccines you need, which are safe for you, and how you should expect to feel after getting them.



Illustrations by Abby Hellstrom

Be a
SUPERHERO

*Get vaccinated!
Protect yourself
and your family.*

Continued

Immunization Schedule for Women

Who Needs This Vaccine and How Often	Routinely recommended during pregnancy?
Hepatitis A: Recommended for women at risk ¹ and those who travel out of the United States. (One series of 2 shots.)	No
Hepatitis B: Everyone under age 18 and women at risk for Hepatitis B2 (One series of 3 shots.)	Yes, if at risk ²
Human papillomavirus (HPV): Men and women up to age 45 unless pregnant. (One series of 3 shots.)	No
Flu Shot (Inactivated influenza vaccine): Everyone over 6 months of age. ³ (Yearly) Inactivated means the vaccine contains killed or inactive viruses, which means the vaccine cannot give you the flu.	Yes, recommended every flu season; can be received anytime during pregnancy
Nasal Spray Flu Vaccine (Live attenuated influenza vaccine): Healthy people aged 2-49 who are not pregnant and have no medical problems. (Yearly: nasal spray) Live means the vaccine contains weakened viruses, which is safe for most healthy people, but not for certain people who do not have a strong immune system or are pregnant.	No
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR): People born after 1957 or who have no immunity when checked with a blood test. Especially important for women planning a pregnancy. (One time with possible need for boosters)	No
Meningococcal: 11-12 year olds should get a meningococcal conjugate vaccine, with a booster dose at 16 years old. Teens and young adults (16-23 year olds) also may get a serogroup B meningococcal vaccine. CDC also recommends vaccination for other children and adults who are at increased risk for meningococcal disease.	No
Pneumococcal: People aged 65 and older or persons with certain medical problems. (Usually 1 time)	No
Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Td or Tdap): Tdap for all women aged 19 or older who have not previously received. Td boosters ever 10 years. (1 dose of Tdap followed by booster doses with Td; Tdap every pregnancy)	Yes, Tdap recommended with each and every pregnancy ⁴
Varicella (chicken pox): Anyone who has not had chicken pox, or who has tested non-immune. (One series of 2)	No
Zoster (Shingles): Healthy adults 50 years and older get two doses of Shingrix, 2 to 6 months apart. Shingrix provides strong protection against shingles and a complication known as post herpetic neuralgia.	No



1. You are at risk for Hepatitis A if: 1) you live in a community that has a high incidence of Hepatitis A, 2) you use street drugs, or 3) you have chronic liver disease
2. You are at risk for Hepatitis B if you 1) have more than one sex partner in 6 months, 2) have sex or household contact with a person who has Hepatitis B, 3) use street drugs, 4) are a health care or public safety worker who could have contact with body fluids.
3. The flu shot is approved for anyone 6 months and older. However, you should not get the nasal spray vaccine if you: 1) are under age 2 or over age 50, 2) are a health care worker, 3) are pregnant, 4) have long-term health problems such as diabetes, asthma, kidney disease, or heart disease. For more info, see: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldvax.htm.
4. You should get a Tdap vaccine postpartum if you did not get vaccinated in pregnancy. Tdap is preferred during pregnancy.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

American College of Nurse-Midwives
<http://ourmomentoftruth.com/your-health/importance-of-vaccines/>

www.cdc.gov/Features/AdultImmunizations

www.adultvaccination.org

This publication was made possible by cooperative agreement number 1U38OT000161 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC or ASTHO.

021016; updated 070620