

Talking to Pregnant Women About Vaccines



When talking to women about vaccines during pregnancy, make a strong recommendation and allow time for them to ask questions. Hearing your answers can help women feel more confident about protecting themselves and their babies with Tdap and flu vaccines.

Which vaccines do I need during pregnancy?

You need a whooping cough shot (also called Tdap) during the 3rd trimester of each pregnancy. You also need a flu shot, which you can get during any trimester. If you are traveling internationally during your pregnancy, you may need additional vaccines.

Why do I need vaccines during pregnancy?

Changes in your heart, lungs and immune system during pregnancy make you more likely to get really sick if you get an illness like flu. Getting vaccinated during pregnancy can also give your baby some early protection.

Are these diseases really dangerous?

Yes. Even healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies can end up in the hospital if they catch the flu. Flu and whooping cough are also very dangerous for young babies, and can even be deadly.

Is it safe to get Tdap and flu vaccines while pregnant?

CDC and a panel of experts who make vaccine recommendations study these vaccines and have concluded that they are safe for pregnant women and their babies. These experts carefully reviewed the available safety data before recommending Tdap and flu vaccines during pregnancy.

What are the side effects of vaccines given during pregnancy?

Most side effects from both flu and Tdap vaccines are mild and include redness, swelling, pain, and tenderness where you got the shot. You may also feel tired, have body aches, or fever. Side effects usually get better on their own in a few days.

Will the flu shot give me flu?

No, a flu shot cannot give you flu. However, it can take up to 2 weeks for the vaccine to begin protecting you. For this reason, we recommend getting a flu shot by the end of October, before flu season really gets going.

Can't I just get vaccinated after my baby is born?

Babies do not get their first whooping cough shot until 2 months of age, and they have to wait until they are 6 months old to get a flu shot. The vaccines you get during pregnancy will help protect your baby during their early months of life.

Isn't it enough to make sure everyone around my baby is vaccinated?

It is important, but also sometimes difficult, to make sure that everyone around your baby is up to date on their vaccines. Your baby can still be exposed to diseases in public places too. Vaccines during pregnancy offer the best protection to your baby until they are old enough to get their own vaccines.

Won't breastfeeding protect my baby from diseases until she gets her own vaccines?

Antibodies in breast milk give your baby some protection from flu and whooping cough, but only if you get vaccinated during pregnancy. Breast milk only offers short-term protection, though, so it's very important for your baby to start her own vaccines on time.



For more information, visit
[cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy)