

Pregnant Women & Influenza (Flu)

Flu is more likely to cause severe illness in pregnant women than in women who are not pregnant. Changes in the immune system, heart, and lungs during pregnancy make pregnant women more prone to severe illness from flu as well as hospitalizations and even death. Pregnant women with flu also have a greater chance for serious problems for their unborn baby, including premature labor and delivery.

Flu shots will protect pregnant women, their unborn babies and even protect the baby after birth.

The Flu Shot is the Best Protection Against Flu

Getting a flu shot is the first and most important step in protecting against flu. The flu shot given during pregnancy has been shown to protect both the mother and her baby (up to 6 months old) from flu. (The nasal spray vaccine should not be given to women who are pregnant.) Learn more about the [flu vaccine \(/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm\)](/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm).

The Flu Shot is Safe for Pregnant Women

Flu shots are a safe way to protect the mother and her unborn child from serious illness and complications of flu. The flu shot has been given to millions of pregnant women over many years. Flu shots have not been shown to cause harm to pregnant women or their babies. It is very important for pregnant women to get the flu shot.

Other Preventive Actions

In addition to getting the flu shot, pregnant women should take additional [everyday preventive actions \(/flu/protect/habits/index.htm\)](/flu/protect/habits/index.htm).

Early Treatment is Important for Pregnant Women

If you get sick with flu-like symptoms call your doctor right away. If needed, the doctor will prescribe an antiviral medicine that treats the flu.

Having a fever caused by flu infection or other infections early in pregnancy can lead to birth defects in an unborn child. Pregnant women who get a fever should treat their fever with Tylenol® (or store brand equivalent) and contact their doctor as soon as possible.

When to Seek Emergency Medical Care

If you have any of these signs, call 911 right away:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- High fever that is not responding to Tylenol® (or store brand equivalent)
- Decreased or no movement of your baby

Additional Resources

- [People at High Risk of Developing Flu–Related Complications \(/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm\)](/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm)
- [Treating Influenza \(Flu\) \[702 KB, 2 pages, 8 1/2" x 11"\] \(/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/treating_flu.pdf\)](/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/treating_flu.pdf)
- [Pregnancy and Influenza Vaccine Safety \(http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Concerns/pregnancy_influenza.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Concerns/pregnancy_influenza.html)
- [Influenza vaccination of pregnant women: letter to providers \[215 KB, 2 pages\] \(/flu/pdf/nivw/influenza-pregnancy-letter.pdf\)](/flu/pdf/nivw/influenza-pregnancy-letter.pdf)



[Pregnant Women and the Flu Shot: Fact Sheet \[186 KB, 2 pages\] \(/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/flushot_pregnant\)](/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/flushot_pregnant)

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