

Vaccines & Pregnancy: Top 7 Things You Need to Know

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy/pregnant-women/need-to-know.html> last reviewed 8/26/21

[Español \(Spanish\)](#)

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COVID-19 Vaccination

Get the latest information about [COVID-19 vaccines while pregnant or breastfeeding](#).



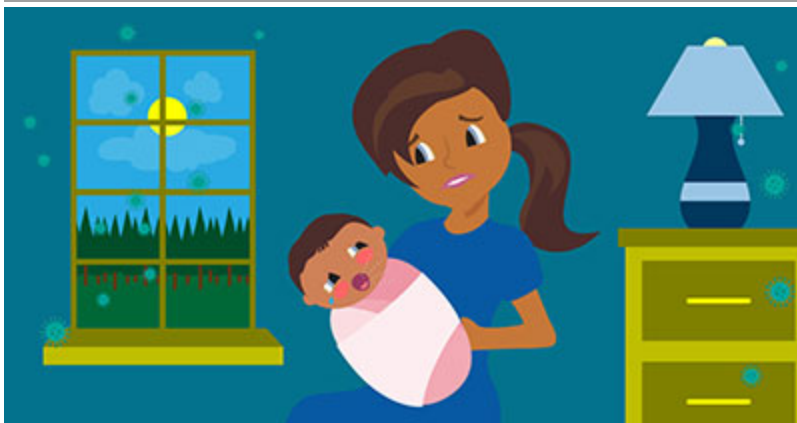
#1. You aren't just protecting yourself—vaccines during pregnancy give your baby some early protection too!

Did you know a baby gets disease immunity (protection) from mom during pregnancy? Getting the flu shot and Tdap vaccine while you're pregnant causes your body to create protective antibodies (proteins produced by the body to fight off diseases) and you pass on some of those antibodies to your baby. This immunity can protect your baby from some diseases during the first few months of life before your baby can get vaccinated, but immunity decreases over time.



#2. Maternal vaccines are very safe...for you and your little one.

Tdap and flu vaccines are very safe for you and your baby. CDC and a panel of experts who make vaccine recommendations 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. Vaccines are like any medicine, which means they can have some side effects. But most people who get vaccinated have no side effects. CDC continually monitors vaccine safety, and the most common side effects they see are mild (redness, swelling, tenderness at the site where the shot was given).



#3. Whooping cough can be really dangerous for your baby.

You'll need a Tdap vaccine during the 27th through 36th week of each pregnancy. Tdap protects against whooping cough, which can be life-threatening for newborns. About half of babies younger than 1 year old who get whooping cough need treatment in the hospital. The younger the baby is when she gets whooping cough, the more likely the baby will need to be treated in a hospital. While some babies cough a lot, other babies with whooping cough don't cough at all. Instead, it can cause them to stop breathing and turn blue. Siblings, parents, or caregivers who don't know they have whooping cough can infect babies, since the disease often causes mild symptoms in older children and adults.



#4. Catching flu when you are pregnant can lead to serious pregnancy complications.

So, you think you are pretty healthy or maybe you've had flu before, and it wasn't that bad. Well, changes in your immune, heart, and lung functions during pregnancy make you more likely to get seriously ill from flu. You also have a higher risk of pregnancy complications such as preterm labor and preterm birth if you get the flu. Catching flu might also increase your chances for serious problems for your baby. Children younger than 2 years old are more likely to end up in the hospital from flu. Get a flu shot if you are pregnant during flu season—it's the best way to protect yourself from flu and

prevent possible flu-associated pregnancy complications. Flu vaccine can be given during any trimester.



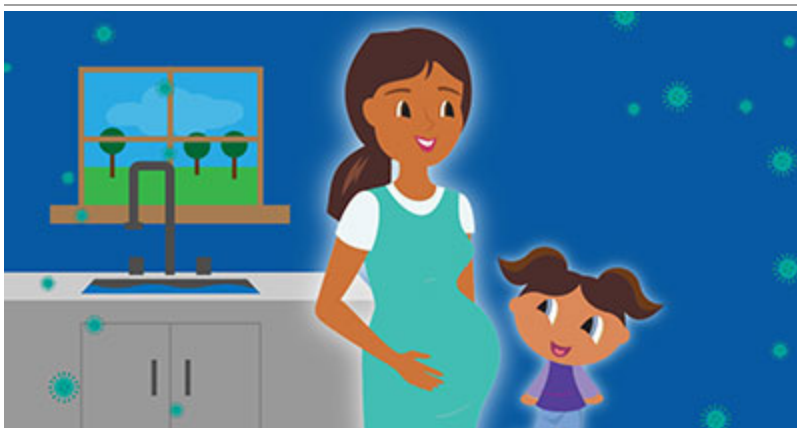
#5. Timing is everything!

You know all about timing. Week after week, you are tracking your baby's growth and development and counting down the days until you meet your little one! When it comes to vaccines, timing is also important. Flu seasons vary in their timing from season to season, but CDC recommends getting vaccinated by the end of October. This timing helps ensure that you are protected before flu activity begins to increase. While a flu shot protects you and your newborn baby, the Tdap vaccine primarily protects your baby. For this reason, CDC recommends you get it in your third trimester, between the 27th and 36th week, so that you pass the greatest number of protective antibodies to your baby before birth. This will help keep her protected during her first few months of life, when she is most vulnerable to serious disease and complications.



#6. Anyone who is around your baby needs vaccines too.

Newborns do not yet have fully developed immune systems, making them particularly vulnerable to infections. Older kids and adults can infect babies with flu and whooping cough, even if they don't feel very sick themselves. Because of this, anyone who is around babies should be up to date on all routine vaccines, including Tdap and flu vaccine. This includes parents, siblings and any other caregivers, like grandparents, nannies or babysitters. Anyone who needs vaccines should get them at least two weeks before meeting the baby because it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies after vaccination.



#7. If you get pregnant again, you'll need vaccines again.

One and done doesn't apply when it comes to vaccines that are recommended for pregnant women. The amount of antibodies that you have in your body after getting vaccinated decreases over time. When you get a vaccine during one pregnancy, your antibody levels may not stay high enough to provide enough protection for future pregnancies, even if your babies are close in age. So, make sure you give baby number 2 (and 3 and 4) the greatest number of protective antibodies and the best disease protection possible by getting your whooping cough vaccine each time you are pregnant. You should also get a flu shot every influenza season.