



Expecting?

Protect yourself and your baby against flu and whooping cough!

Is flu really dangerous?

Yes. If you get the flu, it is not the same as getting a common cold. You can still get the flu even if you are healthy and active. Flu can lead to serious complications such as high fever, pneumonia, and even death for both you and your baby.¹

Pregnant women are about twice as likely to need hospital care if they get flu compared to women who are not pregnant.² Flu can lead to pre-term birth, low birth weight, and stillbirth of the baby.² Catching flu during pregnancy also increases your baby's chances of developing schizophrenia and bipolar disorder later in life.^{3,4}

How dangerous is whooping cough?

For adults, coughing fits can last for months and lead to vomiting, trouble sleeping, and even broken ribs. Whooping cough is highly contagious and can easily spread to others, including babies.⁵

For babies, catching whooping cough can lead to trouble breathing (turning blue or gasping for air), pneumonia, hospitalization, and death.⁵

Babies most often get whooping cough from their family members, including their mothers.⁶

How common are these diseases?

Millions of Californians get flu each year, and about 1,300 babies under 6 months of age are hospitalized due to flu in California.⁷ In 2014, over 11,000 people in California became ill with whooping cough, hundreds were hospitalized, and three infants died. In 2010, almost 10,000 Californians caught whooping cough, and 10 infants died. Tragically, more than 70% of cases hospitalized were babies younger than 6 months old.⁸

How can I protect my baby and myself?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that all pregnant women get a:

Flu Shot

Get immunized as early as possible during the flu season (August–May) every year.^{9,10}

Whooping Cough (Tdap) Shot

Get immunized during your third trimester—27 to 36 weeks of pregnancy—even if you got the shot before becoming pregnant. You will need to get the Tdap shot during **every** pregnancy.^{11,12}



Why immunize during pregnancy?

You may not realize it, but changes to your body during pregnancy put you and your baby at risk for serious complications. Your ability to fight off germs decreases when you are pregnant, making it easier to catch flu or whooping cough.

As your belly grows, there is also less room for your lungs, which can mean more breathing problems if you catch flu or whooping cough.¹

Getting flu and Tdap shots while you are pregnant can help protect you and your baby against these serious diseases. **The protection you get from the shots passes to your baby in the womb.** This will help protect your baby until she's old enough to get her own vaccines to build her own protection.¹³

Your baby will be old enough to get the first flu shot at 6 months of age and the first whooping cough (DTaP) shot at 6-8 weeks of age.^{8,14}

Breastfeeding is very helpful but isn't enough to help your baby fight off flu and whooping cough during the first months after delivery. Your baby counts on you to be immunized.¹³

Where can I get immunized?

Flu and Tdap shots may be available from your doctor, local health department, or pharmacy. To find a nearby location, please visit: vaccine.healthmap.org. Check with the location and your insurance plan for details on cost and insurance coverage.

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How effective are immunizations?

Both flu and whooping cough shots are very effective in pregnant women. A study showed that immunizing pregnant women was 92% effective in preventing hospitalization of infants for flu in the first 6 months of life.¹⁸ Another study showed that getting a flu shot lowered the risk of breathing complications by about 50% in pregnant women.¹⁹ A study also determined that getting a whooping cough shot in the third trimester of pregnancy was 91% effective in protecting babies under 2 months of age against whooping cough.²⁰

How safe are these immunizations?

Millions of pregnant women have safely received flu and whooping cough shots. Multiple studies have shown that getting flu and Tdap immunizations during pregnancy are safe for mother and baby. The immunizations do not affect the growth or development of your baby.²¹⁻²⁴ Flu shots given to pregnant women are made from killed viruses, so it is impossible to get flu from the flu vaccine.²⁵ Similarly, Tdap shots do not contain any live bacteria and can't give you whooping cough. The most common side-effect of both shots is a sore arm. It is much more risky not to get immunized.²⁶

Talk to your doctor about getting immunized. Your baby is counting on you.



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Free copies of this material may be available at your local health department: <http://bit.do/immunization>