

Pregnant women need a flu shot.

Because you are pregnant, we recommend you get a flu shot to protect you and your baby from the flu. Talk to your health care provider about getting a flu shot. This year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, getting a flu shot is more important than ever.

Influenza (the flu) is a serious illness, especially when you are pregnant.

FACT: The flu can cause serious illness in pregnant women.

Getting the flu can cause serious problems when you are pregnant. Even if you are generally healthy, changes in immune, heart and lung functions during pregnancy make you more likely to get seriously ill from the flu. Pregnant women who get the flu are at higher risk of hospitalization, and even death, than non-pregnant women. Severe illness in the pregnant mother can also be dangerous to her fetus because it increases the chance for serious problems such as premature labor and delivery.

The flu shot is the best protection for you — and your baby.

FACT: Getting a flu shot is the first and most important step in protecting yourself against the flu.

When you get your flu shot, your body starts to make antibodies that help protect you against the flu. Antibodies can be passed on to your unborn baby, and help protect the baby for up to six months after he or she is born. This is important, because vaccines do not work in babies younger than six months. Babies can't get the flu vaccine until they are six months old and have developed sufficient immune response. If you breastfeed your infant, antibodies may also be passed in breast milk. It takes about two weeks to make antibodies after getting the flu vaccine. Talk to your doctor, nurse or clinic about getting vaccinated as soon as you can.

The flu shot is safe for you and for your unborn child.

FACT: The flu shot is safe for pregnant and breastfeeding women and their infants.

You can receive the flu shot at any time, during any trimester, while you are pregnant. Millions of flu shots have been given to pregnant women over many years. Flu shots have not been shown to cause harm to pregnant women or their infants. If you have your baby before getting your flu shot, you still need to get vaccinated. The flu is spread from person to person. You, or others who care for your baby, may get the flu and pass it to the baby. Because babies younger than six months are too young to receive the vaccine, it is important that everyone who cares for your baby get a flu vaccine, including other household members, relatives and babysitters.

FACT: The side effects of the flu vaccine are mild when compared to the disease itself.

After getting your flu shot, you may experience some mild side effects. The most common side effects include soreness, tenderness, redness and/or swelling where the shot was given. Sometimes you might have a headache, muscle aches, fever and nausea or feel tired.

Even healthy pregnant women can get the flu and have serious complications. Know the signs and symptoms of flu.

FACT: If you have symptoms of the flu, call your doctor immediately.

If you have flu-like symptoms — even if you have already had a flu shot — call your doctor, nurse or clinic right way. Doctors can prescribe medicine to treat the flu and lessen the chance of serious illness. These medications must be started as soon as possible. If you have any or all of the following symptoms, contact your doctor or nurse immediately:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Body aches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Having a fever from flu, or any other infection early in pregnancy, increases the chance of having a baby with birth defects or other problems. Fever can be brought down with Tylenol® (acetaminophen), but you should still call your doctor or nurse.

If you have any of the following signs, call 911 and seek emergency medical care right away:

- Problems breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness or confusion
- Severe or constant vomiting
- Decreased or no movement of your baby
- High fever that is not responding to Tylenol® or other acetaminophen

Flu and COVID-19 viruses share many of the same symptoms. If you are pregnant and experience flu-like symptoms, avoid contact with others and contact your doctor right away to also determine whether you need a COVID-19 test.



For more information about the flu or the vaccine, call **1 (800) CDC-INFO** or visit **www.flu.gov**



Information provide by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention