

Vaccinations During Pregnancy

When you are pregnant, you share everything with your baby—including protection from certain diseases. To give your baby every ounce of protection you can, it's important to get vaccinated during your pregnancy.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends pregnant women or women thinking about getting pregnant get certain vaccines to protect both mom and baby. The first one is the MMR vaccine, or Measles, Mumps, and Rubella vaccine. This vaccine should not be given to pregnant women, so if you're considering getting pregnant, make sure you're up to date.

During your pregnancy, it is safe to get the flu vaccine to help protect you and your baby. In fact, it is recommended that all pregnant women receive the flu vaccine when they are pregnant. The flu vaccine is safe for pregnant women, but getting the flu is not. The flu is a leading cause of hospitalization for pregnant women, and it can cause premature birth or birth defects in their babies. However, the nasal spray version of the flu vaccine is not safe for you and your baby.

In addition to the flu vaccine, pregnant women should be vaccinated against Whooping Cough, or Pertussis. This is in the form of the Tdap vaccine. Whooping Cough can be life-threatening in newborns, who cannot receive the vaccine until they are 2 months old. Vaccination in pregnancy means some of those protective antibodies get to baby, providing protection until the time when the baby can get the shot himself.

It is also important that people who will be coming into frequent contact with the baby - such as partners, siblings, and babysitters – receive the whooping cough and flu vaccinations. This is to add an extra layer of protection. Talk to them while you are pregnant, so they have time to see their doctors.

American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists recommends pregnant women receive one dose of the whooping cough vaccine, between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy. There are several vaccines you should not get during your pregnancy, including the chickenpox and rubella vaccines because research has not proven them to be safe for your baby.

You may need other vaccines if you have certain risk factors such as a chronic illness or if you are planning to travel during your pregnancy. Be sure to talk to your doctor about which vaccines you need to protect your baby as he grows and develops. And make sure to keep a record of all your vaccinations.

Staying up to date on your vaccinations before and during pregnancy is one way of protecting your baby before he is even born. Once he arrives, it will be important to continue this with his pediatrician in the years to come.