

Vaccinations in Pregnancy

Are vaccinations safe in pregnancy?

There are two different types of vaccines. Some are considered safe to get in pregnancy, others are not recommended.

Dead (Inactivated) Vaccines - These are considered **safe** to get in pregnancy because they do not cause disease. Some that are recommended in pregnancy include the Flu Shot and Tdap vaccine (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis).

Live (Attenuated) Vaccines - These are **not recommended** in pregnancy because they contain weakened bacteria or viruses. They do not cause disease in healthy people. It is recommended these vaccines are given (if needed) at least 4 weeks prior to becoming pregnant. Some of these vaccines include *varicella (chicken pox); and measles, mumps, and rubella.*

Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap):

What is it?

The Tdap vaccine is given to immunize for Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis.

Why is it recommended?

The main reason it is given is to provide protection against Pertussis or ‘whooping cough’ which is very contagious and can cause serious illness to your newborn baby. When you get this vaccine in pregnancy, it not only boosts your immunity, but also provides some to your baby when they are born. When Tdap is given at this stage of your pregnancy, it decreases the chance of your baby getting pertussis or ‘whooping cough’ in the first 6 months of their life. Some immunity can also be transmitted in your breast milk! It is also recommended that all members of your family consider vaccination to ensure they are up to date.

When should I get it?

This vaccine is recommended between 27 and 32 weeks of pregnancy. It does not matter when you had your last Tdap shot, it is recommended to get it at this time in EVERY pregnancy.

Where do I get it?

You can receive this shot from your local pharmacy. This vaccine is not covered under MSP. It costs around \$50.00. If you have extended health coverage, we can write you a prescription to have a portion of the cost covered.

Flu Shot:

What is it?

The seasonal flu shot is modified each year based on research that tells us which strains of the flu virus are likely to be most common during the flu season.

Why is it recommended?

Pregnant people are more likely to get severe symptoms from the flu and have serious complications. Also, getting the flu shot can help protect your baby for up to 6 months after they are born.

When should I get it?

It is recommended to receive the flu shot before it starts to spread in the community. Usually, this is before the end of October but it can still be helpful to get the shot into January and later.

Where do I get it?

You can go to your local pharmacy or health unit to receive the flu shot. It is free.

For more info about vaccines in pregnancy, check out these links!

- <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/tn9107>
- <https://www.pregnancyinfo.ca/your-pregnancy/routine-tests/vaccination/>
- <https://www.cmbc.bc.ca/registrants-handbook/standards-policies/>