

VACCINES IN PREGNANCY: AN OVERVIEW

WHY ARE VACCINES IMPORTANT IN PREGNANCY?

In pregnancy, your **immune system becomes depressed**, which makes you more vulnerable to getting certain infections. **Vaccinations help prevent serious illness and hospitalization from infections**, which is important for both **your health and the baby's health**. Vaccines also play an important role in preventing newborn illnesses. The **antibodies** that you make against certain infections are passed to your fetus through the placenta and to your newborn through breastfeeding. **These antibodies then provide protection to your newborn after birth, when they are most vulnerable to infection.**

ARE VACCINES SAFE IN PREGNANCY?

Not all vaccines are safe in pregnancy (e.g., MMR, Varicella). However, the vaccines we recommend have been **extensively researched in pregnancy and are known to be safe for both you and your baby**. The vaccines listed below do not contain any active viruses or bacteria, and **cannot cause someone to become infected**.

WHICH VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE & WHEN SHOULD I GET VACCINATED?

*please refer to local/provincial/territorial public health recommendations

Vaccine	Purpose	Timing
Flu	Prevents serious illness from common strains of the influenza virus.	At the beginning of flu season, as soon as the vaccine is available in your community.
Tdap	Protects against 3 infections called tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (also called whooping cough). Pertussis can cause serious respiratory infection in infants.	Best time to get Tdap vaccine is between 27-32 weeks of pregnancy for the best newborn protection.
COVID-19	Helps protect against serious illness due to the COVID-19 virus.	According to your local guidelines for COVID-19 boosters. Earlier vaccination can offer protection for more of your pregnancy.
RSV	Protects against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a leading cause of respiratory infection and hospitalization in infants.	<u>Note</u> : Currently, there is the option for either you or your baby to get the vaccine for RSV. Consult with your doctor to decide what is best for your specific case.

Please see our handouts **"The Flu Vaccine & Pregnancy"**, **"Tdap Vaccination During Pregnancy"**, and **"Covid-19 Vaccination & Pregnancy"** for more information.

Ask your OBGYN or health care provider if you have any questions, or find more information online at:

- <https://www.highriskpregnancyinfo.org/vaccine-guide-for-pregnancy-2023>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization-vaccines/vaccination-pregnancy-during.html>

References

Man Hay Wong J, Castillo E, Elwood C, Money D, Poliquin V, van Schalkwyk J, Yudin M, Boucoiran I. SOGC Statement on RSV Immunization to Prevent Infant RSV Infection [Internet]. Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada. 2024. Available from: https://www.sogc.org/common/Uploaded%20files/Position%20Statements/SOGC%20Statement%20RSV_07182024_EN.pdf

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