



You may not realize it, but changes to your body during pregnancy put you and your baby at risk for serious complications from flu or whooping cough.

Getting flu and whooping cough 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 in early life when she is most vulnerable.

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. Flu can lead to pre-term birth, low birth weight, and stillbirth of the baby.

How dangerous is whooping cough?

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

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.

How common are these diseases?

Each year, millions of Californians get flu, and hundreds of babies under 6 months of age are hospitalized due to flu. 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 7 out of 10 babies hospitalized were younger than 6 months old.

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 these life-saving shots:

Flu Shot

By late October (if possible). If you missed it, get it now!

Whooping Cough Shot (Tdap)

As early as possible 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.

 **Pass protection to your baby.
Get immunized during pregnancy.**

Where can I get immunized?

Flu and Tdap shots may be available from your doctor. If not, call your health plan's member services number (on the back of your insurance card). Ask if shots are covered at pharmacies and which pharmacies are in-network. (Medi-Cal now covers shots at in-network pharmacies.) If you need help finding a place to go, call your doctor's office or local health department (<http://bit.do/immunization>).

How effective are immunizations?

Both flu and whooping cough shots are very effective for pregnant women. Getting a flu shot during pregnancy can lower your risk of breathing complications and your baby's risk of catching flu by about half.

Studies have also shown that as many as 9 out of 10 babies will be protected against whooping cough if their mothers get a whooping cough shot while pregnant. Even if your baby gets whooping cough, the transferred antibodies can help protect her from dangerous complications and hospitalization.

For more information, visit:

1. <http://bit.do/flu vaccine>
2. <http://bit.do/pertussis4pregnancy>
3. <http://bit.do/effectiveness>
4. <http://bit.do/aboutflu>

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. The most common side effect of both shots is a sore arm. It is much more risky not to get immunized.

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



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