



## One flu shot protects you and your baby: A “two-for-one” benefit



### Influenza

Flu during pregnancy puts you and your baby at risk for serious illness. Flu is common and caused by a virus. It infects your nose, throat, and lungs. This handout describes how flu affects mothers and babies and how to prevent it:

- ❖ Spread and threat of flu virus
- ❖ Flu during pregnancy
- ❖ Flu and your baby
- ❖ Flu shot safety
- ❖ Prevention of flu



### Spread and Threat of Flu Virus

Flu droplets are released when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or breathes on you.

Infected droplets can also be on things such as, doorknobs or phones. You can get the flu when you touch an infected surface and then touch your nose, eyes, or mouth.

A person can pass the flu onto you without knowing it. Flu symptoms do not start until one or two days after contact with the virus.

Symptoms can be worse and last longer when you are pregnant. Flu symptoms are sudden:

fever	very tired	runny nose	cough
chills	headache	muscle aches	sore throat



### Flu during Pregnancy

- ❖ Pregnant women are at greater risk of serious illness from flu.
- ❖ Your immune system protects you against infections. It is not as strong when pregnant. It changes due to the baby.
- ❖ Flu can lead to a premature (early) birth.
- ❖ Even if you are healthy and never get sick, a pregnant body is less able to fight off the flu.
- ❖ Your flu risks are even higher with overweight, asthma, or diabetes.
- ❖ Problems from flu can happen during pregnancy and two weeks after birth.

## Flu and Your Baby

- ❖ Babies (birth to 6 months) have the highest rate of hospitalization from flu.
- ❖ A flu shot during pregnancy causes your body to make antibodies to protect you and your baby.
- ❖ Babies whose mother go a flu shot are less likely to be hospitalized with flu.



## Flu Shot Safety

Flu shots have been given to pregnant women for more than 50 years. They have not caused harm to mother or baby. You cannot get the flu from the flu shot. The flu shot is an inactivated vaccine (killed virus).

All women need a flu shot. Get scientific facts about the flu shot from a health care professional that you can trust. **Talk to your physician, midwife, or prenatal provider about the flu shot and where to get it.**

If you have severe allergies or had an allergic reaction to a prior flu shot, you should not get the flu shot. Always contact your provider or call your health plan for more information.

## Flu Prevention: Mother and Baby

- The best way to prevent flu is to get a flu shot every year.
- You can get the flu shot any time.
- Everyone needs a flu shot to stop spreading flu to you and your baby.
- Wash your hands often.
- Do not touch your nose, eyes, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your arm or tissue.
- Breastfeed and give your baby more protection and the best health.
- Call your doctor when you have flu symptoms or contact with the flu.
- Keep your baby away from sick people and crowds.
- Get a flu shot for your baby at 6 months of age.



The flu shot is recommended by many experts and health organizations:

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Nurse Midwives  
Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Pediatrics

March of Dimes  
American Medical Association  
American Nurses Association  
Association of Women's Health

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