

# What vaccines should I get while I'm pregnant?

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The vaccines you need depend on your age, lifestyle, medical conditions, type and location of travel, and previous vaccinations. Pregnant women should be vaccinated against those vaccine-preventable diseases that could pose a health risk to their babies either during the pregnancy, or in the first few months of life before it is safe for the baby to be vaccinated. Ideally, *women should be vaccinated before they become pregnant.*

## Vaccines during pregnancy

### OKAY:

- ✓ Vaccines that contain inactivated (killed) viruses

### NOT OKAY:

- ✗ Vaccines that contain live viruses

If a woman has not been vaccinated before conception, she can still receive some vaccines while pregnant. Indeed, some vaccines are very important for pregnant women, and if a woman does not already have them, then she should get them before giving birth.

## What should women be vaccinated against before becoming pregnant?

The following vaccinations are very important for pregnant women but *cannot be received while pregnant:*

- ☐ Rubella (including the MMR - measles, mumps, rubella vaccine)
  - Rubella is extremely dangerous, particularly early in the pregnancy. If a woman contracts rubella during the first trimester, her baby has an 85% chance of becoming infected. Infection can kill the baby or cause it to be born with serious life-long defects.
  - The vaccine should be received one month before becoming pregnant. If possible, confirm immunity with a blood test before becoming pregnant.
  - If women are not already vaccinated, they should receive this immediately after giving birth.

## Which vaccines are safe for pregnant women?

*Vaccines that contain an inactivated, or dead, virus are safe for pregnant women.* A woman may also be vaccinated immediately after giving birth, while she is still breastfeeding. If a woman has not already been vaccinated, then she should get the following while pregnant:

- ☐ Hepatitis B
  - This is given in three doses, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> doses delivered one and six months after the first dose.

The following vaccines are recommended during pregnancy, even if the woman has already had them before:

- Influenza shot
  - The nasal spray contains live virus, so pregnant women should only receive the shot.
- Tetanus toxoid, reduced diphtheria toxoid and acellular pertussis (Tdap)
  - To be received once with each pregnancy, ideally between 27 and 36 weeks.
  - All caregivers should be vaccinated as well. Everyone who will interact with the newborn baby should be vaccinated with Tdap.
- Meningococcal
  - To be received before, during, and after pregnancy if the woman lives in an endemic area.

### **Which vaccines are not safe for pregnant women?**

Pregnant women *should not receive any vaccine that contains a live virus*. Avoid the following vaccines:

- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Measles, mumps and rubella
- Zoster
- Tuberculosis
- Oral polio vaccine and inactivated polio vaccine
- Pneumococcal

### **Can women pass their immunity to their babies?**

Babies are born immune to the diseases that their mother was vaccinated against. After a few months, however, this immunity will weaken and the baby must receive her/his own vaccinations. See the [recommended immunization schedules](#) for more information on when to vaccinate your baby.

### **For more information**

- [Immunization and Pregnancy Vaccines Flyer](#) (CDC)
- [Immunization and Pregnancy Vaccines Chart](#) (CDC)
- [Overview of pregnancy and vaccination](#)