

Frequently Asked Questions for Patients Concerning Flu Vaccination

Pregnant Women & Influenza (Flu)

Flu is more likely to cause severe illness in pregnant women than in women who are not pregnant. Changes in the immune system, heart, and lungs during pregnancy make pregnant women (and women up to two weeks postpartum) more prone to severe illness from flu, as well as to hospitalizations and even death. Pregnant women with flu also have a greater chance for serious problems for their developing baby, including premature labor and delivery.

The Flu Shot is the Best Protection Against Flu

Getting a flu shot is the first and most important step in protecting against flu. The flu shot given during pregnancy has been shown to protect both the mother and her baby for several months after birth from flu. The nasal spray vaccine should not be given to women who are pregnant.

The Flu Shot is Safe for Pregnant Women

The risk of premature labor and delivery increases when pregnant women get the flu, and there is a greater chance of their babies having birth defects. Flu shots are a safe way to protect the mother and her developing baby from serious illness and complications from flu. The flu shot has been given to millions of pregnant women over many years. Flu shots have not been shown to cause harm to pregnant women or their babies. It is very important for pregnant women to get the flu shot.

Early Treatment is Important for Pregnant Women

If you get sick with flu symptoms call your doctor right away. There are prescription antiviral drugs that can treat flu illness and prevent serious flu complications. CDC recommends that pregnant women with flu symptoms be treated with these drugs. Women with exposure to the flu should also take antiviral medications.