

Immunisation and pregnancy

What is it?

Getting certain vaccines before, during and after pregnancy protects you and your baby. Vaccines for pregnant women include:

- **Flu vaccine** – can be taken any time while you are pregnant
- **Pertussis vaccine** – can be taken 20-32 weeks into your pregnancy

If you're planning to get pregnant, your GP may check your history of these vaccines:

- Hepatitis B
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Varicella

If you aren't sure if your vaccines are up to date, your GP can order a test to check. If you have a suppressed immune system or are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, you may be at risk of other diseases, such as pneumococcal diseases. Your GP can discuss this vaccine with you. Vaccines protect you, your family and friends. They reduce the spread of disease and protect you and others before they come into contact with a disease.

The immunity you build up from a vaccine fades over time. You will need these vaccines again if you become pregnant in the future. Also, the flu virus changes every year, so a new flu vaccine is made yearly to protect against the most common strains experts expect to see that year. Your GP may suggest you get the vaccine before the onset of each flu season. Flu season generally runs from June to September. The newest flu vaccine is often ready from April.

What do I need to do to prepare?

There is nothing you need to do to prepare for your vaccines. Both the flu and pertussis vaccines are free for pregnant women. Your GP may help you decide when to have each vaccine. They may also talk to you about your health, vaccine side effects and consent.

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- When do I need to have each vaccine?*
- Are there any side effects?*
- How do I know if my vaccines are up to date?*



What will happen?

The most common way to get your vaccines is through your GP. Some other health services and places of work may also provide vaccines. Before you have a vaccine, your GP may:

- Discuss side effects
- Check your health
- Obtain your consent

They will then give you the vaccine according to the recommended dose. Vaccines are given in the upper arm. Your GP may ask you to stay for 15 minutes after you have had the vaccine to check for any ill reactions.

Where can I learn more?

- **Department of Health and Aged Care** - Immunisation for pregnancy: [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)
- **National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance** - Vaccinations during pregnancy: [ncirs.org.au](https://www.ncirs.org.au)