

Influenza and pertussis vaccination in pregnancy

The influenza and whooping cough vaccines are provided free to pregnant women through the National Immunisation Program.

The most important factor associated with uptake of influenza and pertussis vaccination during pregnancy is a healthcare provider recommendation. Please take all opportunities to speak to your pregnant patients and their partners about the importance of getting vaccinated against influenza and pertussis during pregnancy.

Please note that the evidence around the timing of pertussis vaccination in pregnancy has recently been reviewed and the pertussis-containing vaccine is now recommended as a single dose between 20 and 32 weeks in each pregnancy, including pregnancies that are closely spaced to provide maximal protection to each infant. This advice is reflected in the Australian Immunisation Handbook at www.immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au.

Key messages

- Antenatal vaccination is recommended to protect both pregnant women and their babies from influenza and pertussis and their complications.
- Maternal antibodies against pertussis provide protection to babies until they have received at least two doses of pertussis containing vaccines (at six weeks and four months of age).
- Maternal antibodies against influenza provide protection to babies for the first few months of life until they are able to be vaccinated themselves at six months of age.
- Babies less than six months of age are at greatest risk of severe disease and death from influenza and pertussis.
- Pregnant women are also at increased risk of morbidity and mortality from influenza compared with non-pregnant women. Pregnant women are more than twice as likely to be admitted to hospital as other people with influenza.

Information for health care providers, including a clinical advice fact sheet and promotional materials are available at www.health.gov.au/immunisation