

MANAGING INFLUENZA WITH A BABY AT HOME

What are the symptoms of the flu?

- fever or feeling feverish/chills
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle or body aches
- headaches
- fatigue (tiredness).

The flu is an illness that usually lasts for 5-7 days.

What if I get the flu?

- keep breastfeeding
- control your temperature with paracetamol
- see your GP early if flu symptoms develop.

Your doctor will advise you on treatment options, including antiviral medications.

What if someone in my family gets the flu?

- keep them away from the baby if possible
- wash your hands thoroughly before touching your baby.

What if my baby gets the flu?

- keep breastfeeding
- your baby needs to be urgently assessed by a doctor
- keep your baby away from other people, especially other babies, children and pregnant women.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

ACT 02 6205 2300

NSW 1300 066 055

NT 08 8922 8044

QLD 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

SA 1300 232 272

TAS 1800 671 738

VIC 1300 882 008

WA 08 9321 1312

NATIONAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAM

www.health.gov.au/immunisation

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR IMMUNISATION RESEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE

www.ncirs.edu.au/provider-resources/ncirs-fact-sheets/

**Ask your doctor, specialist,
nurse or midwife about getting
your free, seasonal flu
vaccination today.**

Vaccinate against flu - protect your baby too is based
on a resource developed by NSW Ministry of Health

VACCINATE AGAINST FLU. PROTECT YOUR BABY TOO.

**The flu is a
serious illness,
especially
when you are
pregnant.**



Australian Government
Department of Health



**National
Immunisation
Program**

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Initiative

WHY PREGNANT WOMEN SHOULD GET A FLU SHOT

Influenza (flu) is an infectious disease which can cause serious problems when you are pregnant. Even healthy women with an uncomplicated pregnancy can develop life-threatening influenza. Other possible complications can include miscarriage, premature labour or the need for emergency caesarean delivery.

Pregnant women who get the flu are at higher risk of hospitalisation, and even death, than non-pregnant women. If you are pregnant and develop flu symptoms you should contact your doctor as soon as possible, as treatment with antiviral medication may be advised.

FLU VACCINATION IS SAFE AND PROTECTS YOUR BABY

The best way to protect your young baby from flu is to have the vaccine when you are pregnant. It's safe for you to have a flu shot at any time during your pregnancy.

After having the flu vaccine your body makes protective antibodies that help protect you and your baby from the flu. Babies whose mothers get a flu vaccine during pregnancy are protected from the moment of delivery and continue to be protected for up to six months after birth. That's important because babies under six months are too young to get the flu vaccine themselves – the only way they can be protected is if their mother gets vaccinated during pregnancy.

Having the flu vaccine in pregnancy protects your baby in the same way having the whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine in pregnancy protects your baby.

Babies are more likely to have severe complications following the flu especially pneumonia and middle ear infection. Babies less than six months of age are up to ten times more likely to go to hospital with the flu than older children.



HOW DO I AVOID GETTING FLU?

Vaccination prevents people from becoming infected with diseases. This leads to less disease circulating in the community which not only protects you, but can help protect those around you who are not able to be vaccinated, such as babies under six months of age.

As well as being vaccinated there are some simple things that everyone can do to prevent getting the flu or passing it on to others:

- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, use disposable tissues, and dispose of tissues immediately after use.
- Wash your hands regularly, especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Keep away from people you know who are sick with the flu.
- Avoid crowded places where there may be other people sick with the flu.

FLU VACCINATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: IS THE FLU VACCINE FREE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN?

Yes. The flu shot is recommended and free for pregnant women under the National Immunisation Program.

Q: WHEN CAN PREGNANT WOMEN BE VACCINATED?

The flu vaccine can be safely given to women planning to have a baby or at any stage during pregnancy regardless of their delivery date. There is extensive evidence demonstrating the safe use of the flu vaccine in pregnant women. There is no evidence of harmful effects on the developing baby.

Q: ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS FROM A FLU SHOT?

The side effects of a flu vaccine are mild. Up to one in ten of all adults who receive the flu vaccine experience side effects such as pain, redness and swelling at the site of injection, while fever and tiredness are less common.

Side effects from the influenza vaccine are no more common in pregnant women than in non-pregnant women.

Q: DO I NEED A VACCINATION IF I HAD ONE LAST WINTER?

Yes. Every year a new seasonal flu vaccine is developed. It protects against the types of flu that are expected to be the most common each winter.