



MATERNAL IMMUNISATION

A way to help protect your baby from getting sick before they are born

Maternal immunisation: a choice pregnant mothers can make to help protect their babies

With a new family member on the way, you're probably thinking about how you can help keep them healthy. Getting vaccinated while pregnant, also called maternal immunisation, gives you the ability to pass your antibodies to your baby through the placenta. And therefore, helps protect your baby from getting sick from the moment they are born.¹⁻⁶

What is maternal immunisation?

During pregnancy your body naturally passes on antibodies that help protect your baby against bacteria and viruses in the first few months of life. Maternal immunisation helps you give your baby additional antibodies that help protect against a specific disease without them needing to get an injection themselves immediately after birth.¹

Maternal immunisations boost your immune system, and your body passes that natural protection to your baby in the womb. This strategy is used to protect infants from tetanus, pertussis, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza.^{1,4,7}

Maternal immunisation helps protect your baby in the first few months of life until your baby is old enough to develop their own antibodies through natural exposure to viruses and bacteria or through childhood vaccination.^{1,5}

How does it work?

Vaccine-induced maternal antibodies are passed to your baby in 3 simple steps:^{1,4}



1. You receive a vaccine during your second or third trimester



2. Your immune system produces antibodies that are passed through the placenta to your baby



3. Your baby is born with natural maternal antibodies, helping to protect them from getting sick



The efficacy of maternal immunization during pregnancy is documented in several studies and they have an acceptable safety profile.^{1,5,8}

Maternal immunisation has been recommended by health agencies around the world, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and is a standard practice in many countries, such as the United States and Australia, as well as in many European countries and developing countries worldwide.^{4,8-10}

Various vaccines recommended may include flu, Tdap and RSV vaccine. These vaccines have been shown to be effective and well tolerated for you and your baby.⁸⁻¹¹

With maternal immunisation, there is no delay in protection when it matters most to your baby: at birth¹

Is maternal immunisation right for you?

As you're preparing for your baby, you'll likely have a lot you want to talk with your doctor about. Talk to your doctor to learn more about how to help protect the newest member of your family through maternal immunisation. And since studies have shown that maternal immunisation is an effective way to help prevent your baby from getting sick during the first months of infancy, you may want to ask these questions at your next appointment:⁶

- Is it safe for my baby if I get vaccinated while pregnant?
- Is it safe for me?
- How much protection can my baby get if I receive a vaccine while pregnant?
- What vaccination options should I know about?
- When during my pregnancy should I receive a vaccine?

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The information on this leaflet is intended for general information and public awareness and cannot replace the advice of a healthcare professional.

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