

# VACCINATE AGAINST FLU. PROTECT YOUR BABY TOO. WHAT EXPECTANT MOTHERS NEED TO KNOW

## INFLUENZA IS A VERY SERIOUS DISEASE, PARTICULARLY FOR MUMS AND BABIES

### Messages:

- Influenza is not just a cold. Although many cases are mild, for some people it can be severe and life threatening.
- Influenza is a serious disease for pregnant women, the fetus, and newborn babies.<sup>1</sup>

### Key facts:

- Pregnant women are more than twice as likely to be admitted to hospital as other people with influenza.<sup>2</sup>
- Influenza infection during pregnancy can lead to premature delivery and even death in newborns and very young babies.<sup>3</sup>
- Compared with older age groups, babies less than six months of age are the most likely to be hospitalised with influenza.<sup>4</sup>

## INFLUENZA VACCINATION PROTECTS YOUR BABY

### Messages:

- When a mother gets an influenza vaccine during pregnancy, their baby is protected from the moment they are born.
- The best way to protect your young baby from influenza is to have the vaccine when you are pregnant.
- Babies under six months are too young to get the influenza vaccine themselves. The only way they can be protected is if you get a vaccine during pregnancy.
- Having an influenza vaccine in pregnancy, like the pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine in pregnancy, also protects your baby.

### Key facts:

- Getting an influenza vaccination during pregnancy will protect your baby from influenza.
- It is important to get vaccinated against both influenza and whooping cough during pregnancy. This allows protective antibodies to transfer from the mother to the baby while in the womb. These protective antibodies remain in the baby for the first few months of life.<sup>5</sup>
- Babies of mothers who receive an influenza vaccine during pregnancy have been shown to be 50-90% less likely to have confirmed influenza infection in the first six months of life.<sup>6,7,8</sup>

## PROTECTION FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND THEIR BABIES CAN BE IMPROVED

### Messages:

- The influenza vaccine is recommended and free for pregnant women through the National Immunisation Program.
- You can get the influenza vaccine at any time during pregnancy.
- If you are pregnant, you should make an appointment to get the influenza vaccine if you have not had it:
  - even if the influenza season is yet to commence.
  - even if your baby will be born soon.
- If you are unsure about vaccination, ask your health care provider for information and advice.

### Key facts:

- Some pregnant women are missing out on the opportunity to protect themselves and their babies.

## INFLUENZA VACCINES ARE SAFE IN PREGNANCY

### Messages:

- The influenza vaccine is safe for you and your baby at any stage of pregnancy.
- Getting the influenza vaccine during pregnancy reduces the risks of influenza infection for you and your baby.

### Key facts:

- All vaccines available in Australia are inactivated vaccines, which are considered safe for both pregnant women and their babies.<sup>9,10</sup>
- There is no evidence of adverse events in the fetus following a mother receiving an influenza vaccine during pregnancy.<sup>11,12,13,14,15</sup>
- Studies have shown that receiving the influenza vaccine during pregnancy does not increase maternal or fetal complications.<sup>16,17,18</sup>
- Side effects from the influenza vaccine are no more common in pregnant women than in non-pregnant women.
- Around one in ten people have pain, redness and swelling at the site of injection after getting the vaccine. Fever and tiredness can also occur but are less common.<sup>19</sup>

# INFLUENZA VACCINATION IS RECOMMENDED AS PART OF STANDARD ANTENATAL CARE

## Messages:

- Your specialist, doctor, nurse or midwife should offer you the influenza vaccine at one of your antenatal care visits.
- It is safe to have both the influenza and whooping cough vaccines at the same time.
- Ask your doctor, specialist, nurse or midwife about seasonal influenza vaccination during your visit.
- If you have any concerns, talk to your doctor, specialist, nurse or midwife, or look up Immunisation for pregnancy at [www.health.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.gov.au/immunisation).

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