

All pregnant women need flu shot: Ob/Gyn group

19 August 2014



American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists says vaccination helps mother and baby.

(HealthDay)—A group representing U.S. obstetricians is calling for all pregnant women to get a flu shot.

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), several studies released in recent years have upheld the safety and effectiveness of [flu vaccination](#) during pregnancy.

"The [flu virus](#) is highly infectious and can be particularly dangerous to [pregnant women](#), as it can cause pneumonia, premature labor, and other complications," Dr. Laura Riley, chair of the college's Immunization Expert Work Group, explained in an ACOG news release.

"Vaccination every year, early in the season and regardless of the stage of pregnancy, is the best line of defense," she advised.

The best time to get vaccinated is early in the flu season, regardless of the stage of pregnancy, the guidelines state. However, pregnant women can get a [flu shot](#) at any time during flu season, which typically lasts from October to May.

All women who are or become pregnant during the flu season should get the inactivated flu vaccine, which is also safe for women who have just given birth and those who are breast-feeding. However, pregnant women should not be given the live attenuated version of the flu vaccine (the nasal mist), according to the guidelines.

Before the 2009 H1N1 swine flu pandemic, flu vaccination rates for pregnant women were only 15 percent. That rose to 50 percent in the 2009-2010 flu season and has been around that mark every [flu season](#) since. However, vaccination rates could and should be even higher, according to ACOG.

Flu shots not only protect pregnant women, but their infants as well. Babies can't be given flu vaccine until they are 6 months old, but receive [flu](#) antibodies from their vaccinated mother while in the womb. This provides them with protection until they can be vaccinated directly.

The guidelines appear in the September issue of the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [pregnancy and flu vaccination](#).

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APA citation: All pregnant women need flu shot: Ob/Gyn group (2014, August 19) retrieved 1 August 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-08-pregnant-women-flu-shot-obgyn.html>

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