

WOMEN WHO ARE PREGNANT NEED A FLU SHOT



WHY SHOULD I GET THE FLU SHOT?

Women who are pregnant are at higher risk of complications from the flu. The flu shot helps protect pregnant women from serious illness. If a pregnant woman gets sick with influenza, she is at risk for premature labour and delivery. When a pregnant woman gets the flu shot, it also helps to protect her baby from getting the flu during the first six months after birth, when the baby is too young to get the shot.

It's a good idea to get the flu shot at the start of flu season. Flu season can begin as early as October and last until May. It takes about two weeks for the shot to give you protection against flu viruses. The sooner you get vaccinated, the sooner you will be protected.

Kids between 5 and 9 years old are most likely to spread the flu, because of their close contact with other children at school. If you and your family get the flu shot, you'll be better protected.



WHY DOES BEING PREGNANT PUT ME AT INCREASED RISK OF SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS FROM THE FLU?

When a woman is pregnant, changes in her immune system make it harder to fight off infection. This means that women who are pregnant have a higher chance of getting complications from the flu, such as pneumonia. This is especially true for women in their second or third trimester of pregnancy. They are also at higher risk of hospitalization or even death from the flu.

Pregnant women who get the flu also have a higher risk of serious problems for their baby, including premature labour and delivery.

HOW CAN I AVOID GETTING THE FLU?

- **Get your flu shot.** It will protect you, as well as your family and friends.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains alcohol.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your arm, not your hand.
- Stay at home if you are sick, and avoid contact with people who are sick with the flu.
- Clean surfaces often (for example, counter tops, keyboards and telephones). Flu viruses can live on surfaces for up to eight hours.



IS THE FLU SHOT SAFE WHEN I'M PREGNANT?

Flu shots are a safe way to protect you and your baby from getting the flu. The flu shot has been given to millions of pregnant women for many years and can be given at any time during your pregnancy. Like all medicines, flu vaccine ingredients have been tested to make sure they are safe. The flu shot is also safe for mothers who are breastfeeding.



WHERE DO I GET THE FLU SHOT?

You can get the publicly funded flu shot at a pharmacy, your health care provider's office, a workplace flu clinic or a public health clinic. It's easy to find a flu shot clinic at ontario.ca/flu.



I THINK I HAVE THE FLU, WHAT CAN I DO?

Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough or sore throat, headache and tiredness. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea.

Having a fever in the early stages of pregnancy may lead to birth defects in your child. If you have symptoms of the flu – especially a fever – contact your health care provider immediately.