

PROTECT YOURSELF, PROTECT YOUR BABY

▼ VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX)

Adults who have not had chickenpox can be given a blood test to see if they have protection. If you are not protected, you should get the varicella vaccine after your baby is born. You will need two shots to get full protection. Protection is important because chickenpox is a very serious illness in adults. After getting the vaccine, you should wait 1 month before getting pregnant. If you have not had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine and you come into contact with someone with chickenpox during your pregnancy, tell your health care provider right away. You may need a special medicine called VZIG if you are not protected against chickenpox. If you break out in a chickenpox rash 5 days before or 2 days after you have your baby, your baby may also get this medicine.

▼ HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV4) VACCINE

All sexually active persons can get human papillomavirus infection which is the major cause of cervical cancer in women. HPV4 vaccine is the first vaccine developed to prevent cervical cancer. If you are 9–26 years you should think about getting this vaccine. While you shouldn't get HPV4 vaccine while you are pregnant, it is safe to have right after your baby is born—even if you are breastfeeding. Ask your healthcare provider for more information.

Remember:

Protect yourself, protect your baby from these serious diseases. Make sure your partner, children, friends, relatives and caregivers are vaccinated against flu, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox.

Physician Peer Education Project on Immunization

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Vaccines are an important way to protect yourself and your baby

Which vaccines should I receive when I'm pregnant?

▼ INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINE

One of the most important vaccines to receive when you are pregnant is the influenza (flu) vaccine. Women who will be pregnant during the flu season (October–March) should get the flu shot in October or November—but even January or February is not too late to be vaccinated. Pregnancy makes it more likely that you will have serious complications if you get the flu. Women who will be in their 2nd or 3rd trimester are four times more likely to be hospitalized as a result of flu. Protection from flu is very important for you and your baby.

▼ PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINE

If you have any chronic health condition such as diabetes, asthma, or sickle cell, you should talk to your doctor about whether you need pneumococcal vaccine during your pregnancy.

▼ TETANUS-DIPHTHERIA (Td) VACCINE

▼ TETANUS-DIPHTHERIA-PERTUSSIS (Tdap) VACCINE

Everyone needs a Td booster dose at least every 10 years. Tetanus is found in the soil and can enter the body through any size scrape or cut. This disease causes your muscles to become very stiff (lockjaw). Diphtheria is a very serious disease that can make a person unable to breathe or, cause heart failure or paralysis (unable to move certain parts of the body). A newer vaccine (Tdap) will also protect you against pertussis disease. Pertussis can cause weeks of coughing, sometimes bad enough to cause cracked ribs. It is easy to spread this to infants and it can be a worse disease for them. You may need one of these vaccines to protect you and your baby during (usually after the 1st trimester) or immediately following your pregnancy. Ask your health care provider which is right for you.

▼ HEPATITIS B VACCINE

Hepatitis B is a serious infection of the liver. There is no cure for this disease.

The virus that causes hepatitis B is found in blood and body fluids. The virus can go from mother to baby at birth and the baby can get very sick from this virus. You should get a blood test during your pregnancy to tell if you have the hepatitis B virus. This test can be done anytime during pregnancy. If you are infected with hepatitis B, your baby will receive medicine (called HBIG) and the hepatitis B vaccine after your baby is born. This will protect the baby against the disease. It is important that all babies receive the hepatitis B vaccine before they leave the hospital.

Even if you do not have hepatitis B virus, your baby still should receive hepatitis B vaccine right after birth to be protected.

If you do not have hepatitis B and if you have any risk factors (such as living with someone who is infected with hepatitis B, having more than one sex partner, using IV drugs, having a history of sexually-transmitted diseases, or if you are a health care worker), you should get the hepatitis B vaccine while you are pregnant. It takes 3 doses of the vaccine to be fully protected against the hepatitis B virus. The vaccine is safe during pregnancy and breast feeding.

▼ HEPATITIS A VACCINE

Hepatitis A is also a liver disease. It can make you sick for several weeks or months. If you are traveling to a country where food and water may not be clean, you may be at risk for hepatitis A. You can get the hepatitis A vaccine while you are pregnant. It takes two shots to be fully protected.

Which vaccines should I get after pregnancy?

▼ MMR

You will be tested during your pregnancy to see if you are already protected against rubella (German measles). If you are not already protected against rubella, you need one dose of MMR vaccine after your baby is born. After getting the vaccine, you will need to wait 1 month before getting pregnant again. If you are not protected against rubella and you come into contact with someone who has this disease while you are pregnant, tell your health care provider right away.