



# Expecting?

Protect yourself and your baby against flu, RSV, whooping cough, and COVID-19!

You may not realize that changes to your body during pregnancy can put you and your baby at risk for serious complications from flu and COVID-19. Getting COVID-19, flu, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) and whooping cough shots while you are pregnant can help protect you and your baby from these diseases. The protection you get from the shots passes to your baby in the womb. This helps protect your baby in early life when your baby is most vulnerable to serious infections.

## Are these diseases really dangerous for me and my baby?

Yes. Even if you are healthy, you are at higher risk of getting very sick from flu and COVID-19 during pregnancy. Flu and COVID-19 can cause serious complications for both you and your baby such as high fever, pneumonia, hospitalization, pre-term birth, and even stillbirth or death. For babies, catching RSV or whooping cough can lead to trouble breathing, pneumonia, hospitalization, and death. These respiratory viruses are highly contagious and can easily spread from other people to you and your baby. In the first 6 months of life, babies are at highest risk of complications from infections because their immune systems are still developing.

## How common are these diseases?

Very common. Each year, flu infects millions of Californians and sends hundreds of sick babies to the hospital. Thousands also catch whooping cough every year, which can lead to infant hospitalization and death.

In 2020 and 2021, 1 out of every 4 deaths among pregnant people was due to COVID-19. RSV is the leading cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in babies under a year old. The best way to protect yourself and your baby from these diseases is to get vaccinated.

## How can I protect my baby and myself?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) recommend that all pregnant people get these life-saving shots:

- ✓ **Flu vaccine**—as soon as it becomes available during flu season
- ✓ **Updated COVID-19 vaccine**—if you haven't received it yet
- ✓ **Whooping Cough vaccine (Tdap)**—27 to 36 weeks of pregnancy, even if you got it earlier.
- ✓ **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine**— September–January, between 32 and 36 weeks of pregnancy

Getting COVID-19, flu, RSV and whooping cough shots during pregnancy is the only way to protect your baby before birth. If you didn't get your RSV vaccine during pregnancy, make sure to ask about the RSV immunization for your baby when you deliver.

**Pass protection to your baby.  
Get immunized during pregnancy.**

## Where can I get immunized?

Your doctor's office may have these immunizations. If not, ask your doctor for a prescription to take to the pharmacy. Before you go, call your pharmacy to ask for their immunization hours and to make sure the shots are covered by your insurance. If you have Medi-Cal, shots should be covered at your pharmacy. You can also visit [myturn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov) or call your health plan to find out where to go.

## How safe are these immunizations?

Millions of pregnant people have safely received flu, whooping cough (Tdap), and COVID-19 vaccines. Multiple studies have shown that getting flu, COVID-19, RSV, and Tdap immunizations during pregnancy are safe for mother and baby. The immunizations do not affect the growth or development of your baby. The most common side effect of these shots is a temporary sore arm. It is much riskier not to get immunized.

If your doctor refers you to a pharmacy, ask for a prescription for the shots you need. Make sure the pharmacist gives you a vaccine record to bring to your next prenatal visit! You can also download your digital vaccine record at [mydvr.cdph.ca.gov](https://mydvr.cdph.ca.gov).

**For more information, visit:**

[ACOG website for prenatal vaccination](https://www.acog.org/patient-resources/prenatal-vaccination)  
([bit.ly/prenatalvaccines](https://bit.ly/prenatalvaccines))

## How helpful are prenatal immunizations for babies?

Immunizations during pregnancy are most helpful for babies:

- Flu immunization: Keeps babies from getting the flu about half the time.
- COVID-19 immunization: Makes it less likely for babies to end up in the hospital by more than half.
- Whooping cough immunization: Protects 9 out of 10 babies when given during pregnancy
- RSV immunization: Makes it less likely for babies to end up in the hospital by more than half.

Babies benefit most from prenatal immunizations because even if they get sick, the transferred antibodies help protect against dangerous complications and hospitalization from these diseases.

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Prescriber Name, Address, Phone Number:

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Vaccines recommended during pregnancy:

- Tdap** (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis [whooping cough]) 0.5 mL IM x 1 between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy.
- Inactivated Influenza** 0.5 mL IM x 1
- Updated COVID-19 vaccine**
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine (ABRYSVO)** 0.5 mL IM x 1 September-January, between 32 and 36 weeks of pregnancy.

Prescriber's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ License #: \_\_\_\_\_

Per pharmacy regulations (CCR, Title 16, section 1746.4), please notify us within 14 days of administration of the vaccines our patient received at your pharmacy. Also, please give the patient a copy of the vaccine record to bring to their next prenatal visit.

**Your baby is counting on you for protection. Get vaccinated.**