

VACCINES FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND BABIES

Protect Yourself and Your Child

Why do I need vaccines when I am pregnant?

Vaccines help protect you and your baby against serious, preventable diseases. You probably know that when you are pregnant, you share everything with your baby. That means when you get vaccines, you aren't just protecting yourself—you are giving your baby some early protection too. CDC recommends you get a whooping cough vaccine (called Tdap) and a flu vaccine during each pregnancy to help protect yourself and your baby.



Why does my child need vaccines?

- Vaccines can protect your baby from 14 dangerous diseases before they turn 2 years old. Diseases that vaccines can prevent could be very serious.
- Some preventable diseases are common in the United States, like whooping cough and flu. Others are common in other countries.
- Unvaccinated people who travel to other countries can bring diseases like measles back with them. This puts babies and children at risk if they are not up to date on their vaccines.

What is the vaccination (immunization) schedule and why should my child stay on schedule?

- The vaccination (also called immunization) schedule tells you when your child needs to get vaccines. This schedule is set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- When you follow the schedule, you help protect your child early in life, before your child is exposed to serious diseases.
- For some vaccines, your child needs three or four doses shots before they are 2 years old. Your child might also need booster doses when they get older.



What are the side effects of vaccines?

Some side effects of vaccines are soreness where the child got the shot, fussiness, or a low fever. These go away in a few days. Serious side effects are rare.

How to protect yourself and your child

- Learn which vaccines you and your child need to stay healthy. You can find information on the CDC website (www.cdc.gov/vaccines).
- Get your pregnancy vaccines and your child's vaccines at the times the doctor recommends.
- Some vaccines need more than one dose. Get all recommended doses.
- Ask the doctor how to take care of yourself and your child after vaccines.
- If shots are stressful for you or your child, ask the doctor for tips about how to make them less stressful.
- Get a vaccine tracking card from the doctor or from your state health department. Use it to keep a record of your child's vaccines.
- Ask the doctor to send you reminders about when your child needs their next vaccines.
- If your child has missed any vaccines, work with the doctor to catch up.

Have more questions?

Talk to your child's doctor or nurse or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.



**U.S. Department of
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