

## MANAGING INFLUENZA (FLU) WITH A BABY AT HOME

### What are the symptoms of influenza (flu)?

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness).

Influenza is an illness that lasts for 5-7 days.

### What if I get flu?

- Keep breast feeding
- Control your temperature with paracetamol
- See your GP early if flu symptoms develop.

Your doctor will advise you on treatment options, including antiviral medications.

### What if someone in my family gets flu?

- Keep them away from the baby if possible
- Wash your hands thoroughly before touching your baby.

### What if my baby does get flu?

- Keep breast feeding
- Your baby needs to be urgently assessed by a doctor
- Keep your baby away from other people, especially other babies, children and pregnant women.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

**24 HOUR HEALTH** advice line **1800 022 222**

**KARITANE** 1300 227 464

**TRESILLIAN** 1300 272 736

**PARENT HELPLINE** 1300 130 052 (24 hour service)

**MOTHERSAFE** Sydney Metropolitan Area **9382 6539**  
Non-Metropolitan Area **1800 647 848**

**NSW MINISTRY OF HEALTH**  
[www.health.nsw.gov.au/flu/pregnancy](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/flu/pregnancy)

**NSW PUBLIC HEALTH UNITS** 1300 066 055  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/phus.aspx>

### IMMUNISE AUSTRALIA PROGRAM

<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/immunise-influenza>

### NATIONAL CENTRE FOR IMMUNISATION RESEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE

[www.ncirs.edu.au/assets/provider\\_resources/fact-sheets/influenza-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.ncirs.edu.au/assets/provider_resources/fact-sheets/influenza-fact-sheet.pdf)

*Vaccinate against flu - protect your baby too* is based on a resource developed by the South Western Sydney and Sydney Local Health District Public Health Units.



**It's in your hands**  
[health.nsw.gov.au/flu](http://health.nsw.gov.au/flu)

# VACCINATE AGAINST FLU PROTECT YOUR BABY TOO

The flu is a serious illness, especially when you are pregnant



## WHY PREGNANT WOMEN SHOULD GET A FLU SHOT

---

Influenza, or flu, is an infectious disease which can cause serious problems when you are pregnant. Even healthy women with an uncomplicated pregnancy can develop life-threatening influenza. Other possible complications can include miscarriage, premature labour or the need for emergency caesarean delivery.

Pregnant women who get the flu are at higher risk of hospitalization, and even death, than non-pregnant women. If you are pregnant and develop symptoms of influenza you should contact your doctor as soon as possible, as treatment with antiviral medication may be advised.

## FLU VACCINATION IS SAFE AND FREE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

---

Seasonal flu vaccination is the best way to protect you and your baby. It's safe for you to have a flu shot at any time during your pregnancy. After the vaccination your body makes antibodies that help protect you and your baby from the flu. Your baby will continue to be protected for up to six months after birth. That's important because babies under six months cannot be given the flu vaccination; protection can only be achieved by vaccinating a mother during pregnancy.

Infants less than six months of age are up to ten times more likely to go to hospital with influenza than older children.

Babies are at risk of severe complications following influenza especially:

- Lower respiratory tract infections e.g. Pneumonia
- Acute otitis media (middle ear infection).

**The flu shot is recommended and free for pregnant women under the National Immunisation Program. Ask your doctor, specialist or nurse about getting your free, seasonal flu vaccination today.**



## HOW DO I AVOID GETTING FLU?

---

Vaccination prevents people from becoming infected with diseases. This means there is less disease circulating in the community which not only protects you, but can help protect those around you who are not able to be vaccinated, such as infants under 6 months of age.

As well as being vaccinated there are some simple things that everyone can do to prevent getting flu or passing it on to others:

- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, use disposable tissues, and dispose of tissues immediately after use.
- Wash your hands regularly, especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Keep away from people you know are sick with flu.
- Avoid crowded places where there may be other people sick with flu.

## FLU VACCINATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

### Q: WHEN CAN PREGNANT WOMEN BE VACCINATED?

Influenza vaccine can be safely given to women planning to have a baby or at any stage during pregnancy irrespective of their delivery date. There is extensive experience of safe use of influenza vaccine in pregnant women.<sup>†</sup> There is no evidence of harmful effects on the developing baby.

### Q: HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE FLU VACCINATION?

The flu vaccine triggers your body's defence system to create antibodies, which will fight flu germs if you are exposed to them in the future. In young healthy adults influenza vaccine is up to 80% effective in preventing influenza infection.

### Q: ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS FROM A FLU SHOT?

The side effects of a flu vaccine are mild. Up to one in ten of all adults who receive influenza vaccine experience side effects such as low grade fever, tiredness and muscle aches. Local redness and swelling at the injection site is also common.

Because the flu vaccine doesn't contain any whole flu virus, a flu shot can't give you flu, nor can you pass on the disease because of the vaccination.

### Q: DO I NEED A VACCINATION IF I HAD ONE LAST WINTER?

Yes. Every year a new seasonal flu vaccine is developed. It protects against the four types of flu that are expected to be the most common this winter.

<sup>†</sup>Moro PL, et al Adverse events following administration to pregnant women of influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccine reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. Am J Obstet Gynecol.