

A flu shot is the best way to protect you during pregnancy.

You can get a flu shot at any stage in your pregnancy and at any time of the year.

### Where can I get a flu shot?

You can book a vaccine appointment through your:

- doctor
- maternity care provider, such as a midwife
- participating pharmacist, or
- Aboriginal Medical Service.

### Seeking medical help

If your baby's movement pattern changes, contact your midwife, doctor or local maternity service immediately. **Do not** put off calling until the next day.

Call triple zero (000) immediately if you have difficulty breathing, develop chest pressure or pain or have severe headaches or dizziness. Tell ambulance staff that you are pregnant.

For other matters, call healthdirect on 1800 022 222 (free and available 24/7).

### Contact numbers and resources

#### Healthdirect

Speak to a maternal child health nurse on **1800 882 436** (Pregnancy, Birth and Baby helpline). Available 7am to midnight, every day.

#### Mothersafe

Mothersafe offers support to pregnant women concerned about exposures, including information on vaccines.

Sydney metropolitan area **9382 6539**

Non-metropolitan area **1800 647 848**

#### Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation

[skai.org.au/pregnancy-and-newborn/diseases-and-vaccines/influenza](https://skai.org.au/pregnancy-and-newborn/diseases-and-vaccines/influenza)



For more information, scan the QR code or visit: [health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Influenza/Pages/influenza\\_and\\_pregnancy.aspx](https://health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Influenza/Pages/influenza_and_pregnancy.aspx)



# Protecting you and your baby from influenza (flu)

Influenza is serious, especially when you are pregnant



## Why should I get a flu shot?

Getting a flu shot is the best way to protect you from influenza (flu) and its complications during pregnancy.

It also helps protect your baby in the first 6 months of their life, before they can get their own flu shot.

Pregnant women are more likely to get very sick from the flu. This can put you and your baby at risk of needing hospital care.

Babies under 6 months old are more likely to go to hospital with flu than older children.

The flu shot is safe and effective for you and your baby.

It's recommended that people you see often, such as close family and friends, also get a flu shot.

## What are the symptoms of the flu?

- Fever and chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches or joint pains
- Headaches
- Fatigue (feeling very tired)

Flu symptoms can last for over a week. If you have flu symptoms, contact your doctor or maternity care provider, such as a midwife right away.

## What if I get the flu while I am pregnant?

Even if you are generally healthy, changes in immune, heart, and lung functions during pregnancy increase your risk of severe illness if you get the flu.

Safe treatments are available during pregnancy so talk to your doctor.

You should:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Take paracetamol if you feel unwell
- Move around regularly to reduce your risk of developing blood clots as they can be more common in pregnancy\*

Other steps to stay safe:

- Stay at home if you are sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wash your hands often
- Clean frequently touched surfaces
- Avoid contact with people who are sick. Wear a mask if you are unable to maintain physical distancing in crowded indoor spaces

\*the increased likelihood is not with flu but with being bedbound/immobilised



## Frequently asked questions

### Q: When can I get vaccinated?

You can get the flu shot at any stage of your pregnancy.

### Q: Is the flu shot safe?

Yes. The flu shot is safe for both you and your baby. There is no evidence of increased risks to women or their babies when the woman is given an influenza vaccine during pregnancy. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) strongly recommends a flu shot for pregnant women to protect both the mother and the baby.

### Q: How does the flu shot work?

After you are vaccinated, your antibodies will pass to your baby in the womb.

### Q: Can I get any side effects from a flu shot?

You may get mild side effects. This may include low grade fever, tiredness and muscle aches. It is also possible to have redness and swelling at the place where the needle went into your arm.

### Q: Can I get the flu by getting a flu shot?

No. The flu shot does not contain any live virus. This means a flu shot can't give you flu.

### Q: Do I need a flu shot if I had the flu last winter?

Yes. Every year a new flu shot is developed to protect against the most common strains of flu that are expected that winter. Getting the flu shot every year helps protect you.

### Q: Can I still breastfeed if I have the flu?

Yes, you can still breastfeed if you have the flu.

### Q: Do I need to pay for a flu shot?

No a flu shot is free, although some providers may charge an administration or consultation fee. Ask your doctor, midwife, or pharmacist if this applies to you.