



Pregnancy and the Flu Shot—Protect Yourself, Protect Your Baby

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that all pregnant women consider getting the flu vaccine. The flu vaccination should be included in routine prenatal care, and the best time for pregnant women to receive the vaccine is October or November. It is safe to have the injectable flu vaccine, made with an inactive form of the virus, and it is safe to have it any time during pregnancy.

Pregnant women have higher rates of flu than other groups, and the vaccine provides some immunity to their infants as well.

Talk to your doctor before getting the flu vaccine if you:

- Have a severe allergy to chicken eggs.
- Have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine.
- Have previously had Guillain-Barre' Syndrome within six weeks of receiving the flu vaccine.
- Have had a recent illness with a fever.

There have been numerous studies about possible harmful effects from the preservative called thimersol, a mercury compound that has been used for the past 80 years. The studies have found the preservative causes no harmful effects. If you have concerns about the preservative, there are thimersol-free vaccines available, so ask your health care provider about this option.

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Sources: American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists (ACOG), *Pregnant Women Reminded to Get Flu Vaccination*, October 1, 2008; National Women's Health Resource Center and Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), *Flu Free and a Mom-to-Be*.