

# Vaccinations before, during and after pregnancy



Getting vaccines while you're pregnant is important. Vaccines help your body make antibodies that protect both you and your baby. These antibodies are passed to your baby before they are born, keeping them safe during their first few months of life.

Influenza (flu), pertussis (whooping cough) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are all free for pregnant women.

## Vaccines to get before pregnancy

Some vaccines are best to get before you become pregnant. Ask your doctor if you need these:

- **MMR vaccine:** Protects against [measles](#)<sup>1</sup>, [mumps](#)<sup>2</sup> and [rubella](#)<sup>3</sup>.
- **Varicella vaccine:** Protects against [chickenpox](#)<sup>4</sup>.

## Are vaccines safe during pregnancy?

Yes, the vaccines recommended during pregnancy are safe for you and your baby. They protect against serious illnesses by passing your antibodies to your baby before birth.

You can get vaccinated by your:

- general practitioner (GP)
- maternity care provider looking after you (e.g. midwife, obstetrician)
- pharmacist
- Aboriginal medical service

| Vaccine  | When                                 | Cost  | Why It's Important   |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------|--|
| <a href="#">Flu</a> <sup>5</sup><br>(influenza)            | Anytime during pregnancy             | Free* | <p>Influenza, or the flu, is a respiratory virus that spreads easily (such as by coughing and sneezing) and can cause fever, cough, and fatigue.</p> <p>The vaccine protects you from severe flu and helps keep your baby safe in their first 6 months as they are too young to get their own flu vaccine. Babies under 6 months old are more likely to go to hospital with flu than older children.</p>   |
| <a href="#">Whooping cough</a> <sup>6</sup><br>(pertussis) | 20–32 weeks<br>(usually at 28 weeks) | Free* | <p>Whooping cough (pertussis) is a very contagious disease that spreads easily (such as by coughing and sneezing). It can cause severe coughing fits and can make it hard to breathe, especially for babies. The vaccine protects your baby from whooping cough until they can get their own vaccines at 6 weeks old.</p> <p>Those closest to your baby (such as your partner, siblings or your baby's grandparents) should also be vaccinated if they have not received the vaccine in the past 10 years.</p> |
| <a href="#">RSV</a> <sup>7</sup><br>(Abrysvo)              | 28–36 weeks<br>(usually at 28 weeks) | Free* | <p>RSV is a common virus that can cause colds and breathing problems, especially in babies and young children.</p> <p>The vaccine protects your baby from RSV during their first 6 months. This vaccine is not needed for other caregivers.</p>  |

\*Some providers may charge a small fee for giving the vaccine. Check with your doctor, midwife, or pharmacist.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/measles\\_factsheet.aspx](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/measles_factsheet.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/mumps.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/rubella-german-measles.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Chickenpox.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Influenza/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/whoopingcough/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/respiratory-syncytial-virus.aspx>

A COVID-19 vaccine is not a routinely recommended vaccine during pregnancy but is recommended for unvaccinated pregnant women to lower the risk of severe COVID-19. Pregnant women who are already vaccinated can talk about further doses with their healthcare provider. The COVID-19 vaccine is free\* anytime during pregnancy.

## After your baby is born

### For you

Most vaccines are safe to get right after giving birth, even if you're breast feeding. If you missed the whooping cough vaccine during pregnancy, get it before leaving the hospital.

Talk to your doctor or midwife about any other vaccines you might need.

### For your baby

[On-time vaccination](#)<sup>8</sup> is your baby's best protection from serious diseases. They will get the hepatitis B vaccine right after birth.

Your baby's next vaccines are due at 6 weeks old.

Some babies may need an infant RSV immunisation product (nirsevimab) if the mother didn't get the RSV vaccine or if the baby is at higher risk of getting very sick from RSV. Ask your doctor or midwife if this applies to your baby.

## Have a question?

Call a maternal child health nurse on **1800 882 436** (7am to midnight, every day).

## Additional resources

- [Immunisation programs](#)<sup>9</sup>
- [Australian Immunisation Register](#)<sup>10</sup>
- [NCIRS - Immunisation information and resources](#)<sup>11</sup>
- [Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care - Immunisation](#)<sup>12</sup>
- [AusVaxSafety](#)<sup>13</sup>
- [MotherSafe](#)<sup>14</sup>
- [SKAI](#)<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/vaccinate>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/pages/default.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ncirs.org.au/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation>

<sup>13</sup> <https://ausvaxsafety.org.au/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/royal-hospital-for-women/services-clinics/directory/mothersafe>

<sup>15</sup> <https://skai.org.au/pregnancy-and-newborn>



Visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au/pregnancy-vaccinations](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pregnancy-vaccinations)

