



## Study: 65% of pregnant women not vaccinated against both flu, pertussis

by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

Only about one-third of pregnant women were vaccinated against both flu and whooping cough (pertussis), according to a new study.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urged more pregnant women to receive influenza and tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccines to protect themselves and their babies from potentially devastating diseases.

"It's been proven repeatedly that these vaccinations are safe for pregnant women and their developing babies and effective in preventing serious complications from influenza and whooping cough," CDC Principal Deputy Director Anne Schuchat, M.D., said in a new briefing Tuesday. "When pregnant women get flu vaccine and Tdap, they pass protective antibodies to their developing babies, keeping them safe from influenza and whooping cough during the first few months of life. Vaccination also reduces a pregnant woman's own risk for these diseases."

The CDC recommends pregnant women receive an influenza vaccine during any trimester and Tdap early in the third trimester of each pregnancy. Flu shots reduce a pregnant woman's risk of hospitalization due to flu by 40% and the risk to her baby under 6 months by 72%. Tdap reduces the risk of hospitalization for whooping cough by 91% for infants under 2 months.

In a survey earlier this year of about 2,100 women ages 18-49 who recently had been pregnant, 54% said they received influenza vaccine, 55% got Tdap and 35% received both, according to results published in a [Vital Signs report](#). Vaccination rates were lower among black women and women with lower socioeconomic status.

The most common reasons for not being vaccinated were believing flu shots are ineffective, not realizing Tdap is recommended during each pregnancy and concerns about safety of each of the vaccines.

Dr. Schuchat encouraged clinicians to address women's questions and concerns, make them aware of the risks of not being vaccinated and make a strong recommendation for both vaccines.

"No babies should suffer or die from influenza or whooping cough because of a missed opportunity for the child's mother to be vaccinated while she was pregnant," she said.

### Resources

- [CDC adult immunization schedule](#)
- [AAP policy "Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Influenza in Children, 2019-2020"](#)
- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on influenza](#)
- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on whooping cough](#)