

Frequently Asked Questions For New Parents About Vaccines

We know that making the best choices for your child's health is a parent's top priority. Vaccines are one of the best ways a parent can protect their child from illness.



Which vaccines do I need during pregnancy?

You need a whooping cough shot (also called Tdap) during the 3rd trimester of each pregnancy. You also need a flu shot, which you can get during any trimester. Depending on the time of year, your doctor may also recommend an RSV vaccine. Finally, if you are traveling internationally during your pregnancy, you may need additional vaccines.

Why do I need vaccines during pregnancy?

Changes in your heart, lungs and immune system during pregnancy make you more likely to get really sick if you get an illness like flu. Getting vaccinated during pregnancy also gives your baby some early protection from these diseases.

Are these diseases really dangerous?

Yes. Even healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies can end up in the hospital if they catch the flu. Flu and whooping cough are also very dangerous, even deadly, for young babies before they're old enough to be vaccinated.

Is it safe to get Tdap and flu vaccines while pregnant?

CDC and a panel of experts who make vaccine recommendations study these vaccines for a long time and have concluded that they are safe for pregnant women and their babies.

What are the side effects of vaccines given during pregnancy?

Most side effects from both flu and Tdap vaccines are mild and include redness, swelling, pain, and tenderness where you got the shot. You may also feel tired, have body aches, or fever. Side effects usually get better on their own in a few days.

Are vaccines safe for my child?

Yes. Vaccines are very safe. Our long-standing vaccine safety system ensures that vaccines are as safe as possible. Millions of children safely receive vaccines each year. The most common side effects are very mild, such as pain or swelling at the injection site.

How can I best protect my baby against illness?

It is difficult to know whether everyone around your baby is up to date on their vaccines, which could expose your little one to disease. Vaccines during pregnancy pass the best protection to your baby until they are old enough to get their own vaccines.

Why should I follow the CDC's recommended childhood vaccine schedule?

The recommended childhood vaccination schedule balances when a child is likely to be exposed to a disease and when a vaccine will be most effective. It is always better to prevent a disease than to treat one after it occurs.

Once your baby is born, visit immunizevirginia.org/for-pregnant-people to follow our mascot Tracker, who helps you track which vaccines your baby needs.

