

Give your baby a strong start

Vaccines in pregnancy protect tiny lungs from serious illness

Becoming a parent is a big and special moment. You want to do everything you can to keep your baby safe, even before they are born. One of the best ways to protect your baby is to have your recommended vaccines during pregnancy.

These vaccines are safe, free, and strongly recommended by the NHS. They help protect both you and your baby from illnesses that can be serious.

This leaflet explains the **vaccines offered in pregnancy** for **whooping cough, flu** and **RSV**.



Why vaccines in pregnancy matter

When you get vaccinated in pregnancy, your body makes antibodies. These antibodies pass to your baby through the placenta. This gives your baby protection in their first weeks and months, when they are too young to have their own vaccines.

Vaccines reduce the chance of your baby becoming very unwell. They also lower your own risk of getting infections that can harm you during pregnancy.



Flu vaccine

Flu spreads quickly in winter. Flu can make pregnant women much more unwell than usual and can lead to early birth or low birthweight.

The flu vaccine is safe in any stage of pregnancy and helps protect both you and your baby.

Last year, the flu vaccine reduced hospital cases in adults under 65 by almost 50%.



Whooping cough vaccine

Whooping cough is a serious lung infection. It spreads very easily. Young babies often become very sick and most will need care in hospital if they catch it.



Getting the whooping cough vaccine in pregnancy protects your baby by passing strong antibodies to them. **This protection is around 90% effective and can prevent hospital stays and even deaths.**

You can have this vaccine from 16 weeks, and ideally before 32 weeks. If you are already later in pregnancy, you can still have it. It may give less protection, but it is still helpful. **Ask your midwife, GP surgery or the maternity vaccination team if you have not been offered it.**



RSV vaccine

RSV is a virus that affects breathing, especially in winter. It can cause bronchiolitis and pneumonia in babies. Babies under one year are most at risk.

The RSV vaccine in pregnancy gives your baby strong protection in their early months. **It can reduce the risk of severe illness by around 70%.**

You are usually offered this vaccine from 28 weeks pregnant. **If you were not offered it at that time, please contact your midwife, GP surgery or the maternity vaccination team.**



Are the vaccines safe?

Yes. These vaccines have been used for many years and are carefully checked for safety. Large studies show no increased risk for mothers or babies.



How to get your vaccines

You can get your vaccines from your GP practice, your midwife, or your maternity vaccination team.

If you have not been offered a vaccine, or if you are unsure, please ask. **Asking questions is always okay.**



Protect your baby today

Vaccines in pregnancy help give your baby the best start. They protect tiny lungs, tiny bodies, and tiny lives.

Speak to your midwife, GP surgery or the maternity vaccination team to get your vaccines and protect your baby from serious illness.

