



# Vaccines during pregnancy and why they matter:





## A community conversation guide

For many years, vaccines have had an important role in the health of communities. They've helped bring diseases like polio, measles, and whooping cough to an all-time low, and protect vulnerable groups, especially pregnant people. Today's digital world, however, fuels misinformation about vaccines. This causes many, including pregnant people and those who recently gave birth, to be doubtful. As an active community member, you have the power to shape the narrative around the importance of vaccines.

### 1. Know the basics

Vaccines during pregnancy protect pregnant people from potentially serious illnesses, such as the flu and COVID-19. This protection extends to the developing baby. Complications from the flu during pregnancy can lead to preterm birth, low birthweight, and pregnancy loss.

Vaccines contribute to a healthy start for both birthing people and babies. Newborns are at higher risk of getting seriously sick from an infection. That's why getting vaccinated for diseases such as the flu, RSV, and whooping cough during pregnancy is so important. Vaccines that protect against these conditions help pass on immunity to the baby, offering early protection.

Flu vaccine 	Maternal RSV vaccine 	COVID-19 vaccine 	Tdap vaccine 
<p>Helps protect to pregnant and postpartum people from the seasonal flu. This protection also extends to their baby.</p>	<p>Recommended for and available to pregnant people between 32 weeks and 36 weeks. The vaccine protects the baby from Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), a respiratory virus that can be life-threatening.</p> <p><i>*Offered during RSV season (this starts in the fall and peaks in winter).</i></p>	<p>Protects against COVID-19 which can cause serious complications for both mom and baby. Research shows that COVID-19 vaccines are safe during pregnancy and breastfeeding, offering crucial protection.</p>	<p>This vaccine is offered to pregnant people between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy. It protects babies from pertussis (whooping cough), until they can receive their own vaccine.</p>

### 2. Tackle misinformation

Let's create a community where open communication and science-based information encourage confident choices for all moms. Here are some common questions and concerns about vaccines:

<p><b>Is natural immunity better?</b></p> <p><b>Fact:</b></p> <p>Recovering from an illness can provide immunity, but it comes with a high risk of severe illness and complications. Vaccines offer a safer way to build immunity without the risks.</p>	<p><b>Can getting too many vaccines overwhelm the immune system?</b></p> <p><b>Fact:</b></p> <p>The immune system is exposed to countless germs daily. Think of vaccines as tiny shields. They train your body to recognize and fight harmful viruses, lowering the risk of getting seriously sick.</p>	<p><b>Will vaccination during pregnancy cause autism in babies?</b></p> <p><b>Fact:</b></p> <p>Many studies have debunked the link between vaccines and autism. Vaccines are safe and do not increase the risk of developmental disorders.</p>
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### 3. Conversation starters and advice for next steps

*“Have you ever wondered about the safety of vaccines during pregnancy? Scientific studies show that vaccines, like the flu shot, not only protect pregnant people but also contribute to a healthier start for their babies.”*

*“Did you know that by getting vaccinated, we contribute to a healthier community, reducing the risk of infectious diseases that can spread among us?”*

*“Being an advocate for your own health and wellness is powerful. Let’s encourage one another to take an active role in making informed decisions about routine vaccines and immunizations and promote a healthier future for our community.”*

### 4. Consider culture and personal beliefs

Understanding different perspectives is important. When sharing information about vaccines, keep in mind the diverse backgrounds cultures and languages within your community. Be open to questions and address concerns. By promoting routine vaccines, you can encourage pregnant people to make informed decisions and build a healthy community, one vaccination at a time.



### Resources

- American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG): [acog.org/topics/immunization](https://acog.org/topics/immunization)
- US Health and Human Services: [hhs.gov/immunization](https://hhs.gov/immunization)
- American Academy of Pediatrics: [healthychildren.org](https://healthychildren.org)
- Vaccine finder: [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov)
- Find a health center: [findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov](https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control: [cdc.gov/vaccines](https://cdc.gov/vaccines)

**For more information and additional conversation, resources visit [marchofdimes.org/vaccinestoolkit](https://marchofdimes.org/vaccinestoolkit)**