

Can I have the influenza, COVID-19 and whooping cough vaccines at the same time?

The influenza, whooping cough and COVID-19 vaccines can safely be given at the same time. You can also get them at different visits.

Where can I get vaccinated?

You can get vaccinated at your immunisation provider or antenatal clinic.

Are the influenza, COVID-19 and whooping cough vaccines safe?

Yes. The influenza vaccine has been given safely to millions of pregnant women worldwide over many years. Since 2012, WA Health has followed up more than 9,000 women who were vaccinated against influenza and/or whooping cough during pregnancy, with no serious adverse effects reported.

All COVID-19 vaccines available in Australia have been provisionally approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), meaning they have met rigorous standards for safety, quality and efficacy.

Who else can be vaccinated to protect my baby?

People who will be in close contact with your baby, such as siblings (aged 6 months and above) and grandparents, should also be vaccinated against influenza, COVID-19 and whooping cough.

This is known as ‘cocooning’ and will reduce the chance of these infections being passed on to your baby. This is especially important if your baby has other risk factors such as a weakened immune system.

Around 80 per cent of babies with whooping cough get the infection from a parent or sibling.

Close adult contacts who haven’t had a whooping cough vaccine in the past 10 years, should receive a booster dose. It’s also important siblings are up-to-date with their childhood vaccinations.



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Immunisation for pregnant women

Get your free influenza , COVID-19 and whooping cough vaccines



GET VACCINATED



COVER COUGHS



WASH HANDS



CLEAN SURFACES



STAY AT HOME

## Vaccines for pregnant women

Pregnant people and newborns are more at risk of becoming seriously ill from influenza, COVID-19 and whooping cough.

Vaccination not only protects you now, but also your baby for their first weeks of life when they are too young to be vaccinated themselves. It is recommended pregnant people receive the influenza (flu) and whooping cough (pertussis) vaccines during each pregnancy and make sure they are up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. These vaccines are free for pregnant people and will help protect themselves and their babies.

### Influenza (flu)

Influenza, commonly known as flu, is caused by the influenza virus. It is easily spread by coughing or sneezing, or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your mouth or nose.

Symptoms may include sudden onset of fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, severe tiredness and loss of appetite. Complications may include pneumonia, worsening of other illnesses and death.

### Why is it so important to get the influenza vaccine?

Pregnant people who get influenza are at higher risk of hospitalisation, and even death, than non-pregnant people. Severe illness during pregnancy can also increase the chance of serious problems such as premature labour and birth. Research shows the risk of stillbirth is reduced by 51 per cent in pregnant people who are immunised against influenza.

### How does the vaccine protect my baby?

When you are immunised against influenza, your body makes antibodies that help protect you against influenza. These pass through your placenta to protect your unborn baby for up to 6 months after birth.

This is important because babies younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious, potentially life-threatening complications from influenza, but their immune systems are not yet developed enough to be immunised against influenza themselves. Babies can get an annual influenza vaccine from 6 months of age.

You can get the influenza vaccine at any stage of pregnancy.

### Why do I need the influenza vaccine seasonally?

Influenza viruses change quickly, so a vaccine from a previous year may not protect you and your baby against the viruses circulating in the community now. It's recommended to get the influenza vaccine every year before winter, however it's never too late to get vaccinated.

## COVID-19

Pregnant people are at a higher risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19. Vaccination is the best way to reduce these risks and provides protection to your unborn baby. You can get the COVID-19 vaccine at any stage during pregnancy.

### Why is it so important to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that affects the respiratory system.

The virus can cause mild to serious illness, and even death.

Pregnant people have a higher risk of severe illness if they are infected with COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people with COVID-19 of the same age.

This includes an increased risk of hospitalisation, admission to an intensive care unit (ICU) and invasive ventilation.

There is also an increased risk of complications for the baby during pregnancy including a higher risk of stillbirth and being born prematurely.

Vaccination is the best way to reduce these risks.

Pregnant people should discuss vaccination with their GP or immunisation provider if they are not up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations.

### How does the vaccine protect my baby?

Research shows that the antibodies created during pregnancy after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine can cross the placenta. This occurred in women who received their first dose early in pregnancy and were fully vaccinated before their baby was born.

These antibodies may provide the baby with some protection against COVID-19 for the first few months of life.

## Whooping cough (pertussis)

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is a highly infectious bacterial disease that is easily spread by coughing and sneezing. It affects the lungs and airways causing uncontrollable coughing and difficulty breathing.

In their first few months of life, your baby is at greatest risk of catching whooping cough and having severe, potentially life-threatening complications from the infection including breathing problems, pneumonia, brain damage and sometimes death.

### Why is it so important to get the whooping cough vaccine?

Parents are a common source of whooping cough infection for babies. Babies under 6 weeks cannot get the whooping cough vaccine because their immune system is not developed enough.

To give your baby optimal protection when they are born, you should get vaccinated during the second or third trimester, ideally between 20 to 32 weeks of pregnancy. You will need a whooping cough vaccine for every pregnancy because your immunity will reduce over time.

### How does the vaccine protect my baby?

After receiving the whooping cough vaccine, your body makes protective antibodies (proteins produced by the body to fight diseases). Your immunity will be passed on to your baby as the antibodies pass through the placenta.

Studies show whooping cough vaccination during pregnancy reduces whooping cough in babies less than 3 months of age by over 90 per cent.

Your baby should start a course of whooping cough vaccines when they are between 6 and 8 weeks of age to ensure ongoing protection.