

MATERNAL IMMUNIZATION

— TASK FORCE —

Obstetric Care Professionals Urge: The Time for Influenza Vaccination is Now

Flu season is here, and many parts of the country are already seeing unprecedented levels of influenza-like illness and confirmed influenza infection. That is why, collectively, the **American Academy of Family Physicians; American College of Nurse-Midwives; American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses; National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health, and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine** are urging health care professionals to strongly recommend flu vaccination for all patients—especially those who are pregnant—and offer vaccination in your office whenever possible.

Flu activity is surging at alarming rates.

- Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that flu-related hospitalizations are the highest they have been in over 10 years.
- At the time of this Call to Action, there have already been five pediatric deaths this season (1).
- Data indicate fewer people are getting vaccinated. In pregnant people alone, there has been an 8% decrease in vaccination since the 2019–2020 flu season (2).

Pregnant individuals are at increased risk of severe illness and poor outcomes related to influenza infection.

- Flu can be an especially serious disease for this population because of the increased risk of fetal demise (3), preterm labor, and preterm birth (4,5).
- Influenza can also cause severe, life-threatening illness in pregnant individuals themselves (6, 7).

Influenza vaccination plays a critical role in protecting pregnant individuals against serious illness and potentially devastating outcomes.

- Influenza vaccination helps prevent severe illness and hospitalization in pregnant people who get the flu.
- Influenza vaccination during pregnancy transfers antibodies to the fetus, helping to protect infants after birth against the flu before they become eligible for vaccination at 6 months (8).
- Flu vaccines have an excellent safety profile and have been safely administered to millions of pregnant and lactating people.
- Data from the Southern Hemisphere indicate that this year's vaccine effectively reduced the risk of hospitalization from A(H3N2)—the predominantly circulating influenza strain—by nearly 50% (9).

A strong recommendation from a trusted health care professional can be the deciding factor in a person's choice to get vaccinated.

- Even if a patient has already declined vaccination, this season's increased flu activity may have changed their opinion about getting vaccinated.
- Flu vaccine should be given as soon as possible in pregnancy; there is no need to wait for a specific trimester to get vaccinated.

Be a champion for vaccination this year and every year, and encourage your staff, coworkers, and patients to receive a flu vaccine to protect themselves and others.

For more information and resources, see the [Maternal Immunization Task Force Resource Page](#).



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