INFLUENZA IS A VERY SERIOUS DISEASE, PARTICULARLY FOR MUMS AND BUBS

- Influenza is not just a cold – it can be a very serious disease.
- Influenza is particularly risky for pregnant women, the fetus, and newborn babies.¹

**Key facts:**

- Pregnant women are up to 5 times more likely than other women to be admitted to intensive care with influenza.²
- Influenza infection during pregnancy can lead to premature delivery and even death in newborns and very young babies.³
- Compared with older age groups, babies less than five months of age are the most likely to be hospitalised with influenza.⁴

INFLUENZA VACCINATION PROTECTS YOUR BABY

- Protect your baby from influenza from day one – have a flu shot with each pregnancy.
- The best way to protect you and your young baby from influenza is to have the vaccine when you are pregnant.
- Babies under 6 months are too young to get the influenza vaccine themselves so they need protection from you.
- Not having the influenza vaccine while pregnant puts mothers and their babies at unnecessary risk.

**Key facts:**

- Influenza vaccination in pregnancy is safe.
- Babies born to women vaccinated against influenza while pregnant are not at increased risk of being premature or of low birth weight.⁵
- Women get vaccinated against pertussis (whooping cough) in pregnancy to protect their babies.
- Influenza causes even more hospitalisations and deaths in babies than whooping cough.
- Getting an influenza vaccination during pregnancy will protect your baby.
  - Getting vaccinated against both influenza and whooping cough during pregnancy allows protective antibodies to transfer from the mother to the baby while in the womb. These protective antibodies then remain in the baby for the first few months of life.⁶
- Babies of mothers who receive an influenza vaccine during pregnancy have been shown to be 60% less likely to have laboratory confirmed influenza in the first 6 months of life.⁷
- In one study, 9 out of 10 babies whose mothers receive an influenza vaccine during pregnancy avoided hospitalisation from influenza in the first 6 months of life.⁸

VACCINATE AGAINST FLU. PROTECT YOUR BABY TOO.

WHAT EXPECTANT MOTHERS NEED TO KNOW
PREGNANT WOMEN ARE NOT GETTING THE PROTECTION THEY AND THEIR BABIES NEED

- The influenza vaccine is recommended and free for pregnant women through the National Immunisation Program.
- The influenza vaccine can be given at any time during pregnancy, not just in winter.
- You should make an appointment to get the influenza vaccine if you are pregnant and have not yet had the vaccine:
  - Even if the influenza season is yet to commence.
  - Even if your baby will be born soon.
- If you are unsure about vaccination, ask your health care provider for information and advice.

Key facts:
- Influenza vaccination in pregnancy works, however many pregnant women are missing out on the opportunity to protect themselves and their babies.
- The results of studies vary, however, research is showing that only about 1 in 3 or 1 in 2 pregnant women are getting the influenza vaccine.

INFLUENZA VACCINES ARE SAFE IN PREGNANCY

- The influenza vaccine is safe for you and your baby at any stage of pregnancy.

Key facts:
- All influenza vaccines available in Australia are inactivated vaccines, which are considered safe for both pregnant women and their babies.
- Studies have shown that receiving the influenza vaccine during pregnancy does not increase maternal or fetal complications during pregnancy.
- The expected mild adverse events following influenza vaccination occur at the same rate in pregnant women as those who are not pregnant.
- Reactions at the injection site (e.g., redness, swelling, and pain) occur in about 1 in 10 adults who receive the vaccine and systemic reactions (fever, tiredness, myalgia) occur in fewer people than that.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION SHOULD BE PART OF YOUR ANTENATAL CARE

- Your doctor or midwife should offer you the influenza vaccine at one of your antenatal care visits.
- If you have not already had your influenza vaccine in this pregnancy, it is safe to have both the influenza and whooping cough vaccines at the same time.
- Ask your obstetrician, doctor or midwife about seasonal influenza vaccination during your visit.
- If you have any concerns talk to your doctor or midwife, or look up the Pregnant Women page on the Immunise Australia website http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/pregnant-women

Key facts:
- Most pregnant women receive the influenza vaccine in April and May, i.e., ahead of the flu season. Very few women receive the influenza vaccine at other times of the year, despite the fact they would benefit from it.


8 Benowitz I et al. 2010. Influenza vaccine given to pregnant women reduces hospitalization due to influenza in their infants. Clinical Infectious Diseases; 51: 1355-61.


10 National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance. 2015. Vaccinations during pregnancy protect expectant mothers and their babies. www.ncirs.edu.au
