

Pregnant?

You need a flu shot

Why should I get the flu shot?

There is a higher risk of complications from the flu when you are pregnant. When pregnant, the flu shot helps protect from serious illness from the flu. If you get sick with influenza when pregnant, you are at risk for premature labour and delivery. Getting the flu shot also helps to protect your baby from getting the flu during the first 6 months after birth, when the baby is too young to get the shot.

It's a good idea to get the flu shot at the start of flu season. Although the exact timing and duration of flu seasons can vary, flu activity can begin as early as November and last until May. It takes about 2 weeks for the shot to give you protection against flu viruses. The sooner you get vaccinated, the sooner you will be protected.

Children in schools and daycares are at risk of getting and spreading the flu, as they have close contact with one another during the day. If you and your family get the flu shot, you'll be better protected.

Why does being pregnant increase the risk of serious complications from the flu?

During pregnancy, there are changes in the immune system and how the body works. This means that when you are pregnant, you are at high risk of complications from the flu, such as pneumonia, and hospitalization.

This is especially true when in the second or third trimester of pregnancy. There is also a higher risk of hospitalization or even death from the flu.

Getting the flu when pregnant can also have a higher risk of serious problems for the baby, including premature labour and delivery.

Is the flu shot safe when I'm pregnant?

Flu shots are a safe way to protect you and your baby from getting the flu. You can safely get the flu shot at any time while you are pregnant or breast-feeding. The flu shot has been given to millions of pregnant people for many years. Like all medicines, flu vaccine ingredients have been tested to make sure they are safe.

How can I avoid getting the flu?

- Get your flu shot. It will protect you, as well as your family and friends.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains alcohol.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your arm, not your hand.
- Stay at home if you are sick and avoid contact with people who are sick with the flu.
- Clean surfaces often (for example, counter tops, keyboards and telephones). Flu viruses can live on surfaces for up to 48 hours.

I think I have the flu, what can I do?

Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough or sore throat, headache and tiredness. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea.

Having a fever in the early stages of pregnancy may lead to birth defects in your child. If you have symptoms of the flu – especially a fever – contact your doctor or nurse practitioner immediately or call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 to speak with a health care professional.

Where do I get the flu shot?

You can get the free flu shot at a pharmacy, your doctor or nurse practitioner's office, a workplace flu clinic or a public health clinic.



For more information, visit:
[**ontario.ca/flu**](https://ontario.ca/flu)