

WELLINGTON
OBSTETRICS



FLU VACCINATION IN PREGNANCY

P. 04 830 2960

F. 04 830 2961

A. 38 RIDDIFORD ST, NEWTOWN, WELLINGTON

E. RECEPTION@WELLINGTONOBSTETRICS.CO.NZ

W. WELLINGTONOBSTETRICS.CO.NZ

FLU VACCINATION IN PREGNANCY

Influenza is a very serious and potentially life-threatening illness, caused by the influenza virus. Major outbreaks associated with severe disease are usually caused influenza virus types A and B.

Although most healthy people will suffer a serious but self-limited illness lasting one to two weeks, some groups are particularly vulnerable to significant disease and potentially death. Pregnant women are more likely to become seriously ill and to die than the general population. This vulnerability probably relates to changes in maternal physiology, including changes to the respiratory and cardiovascular system with reduced lung capacity and changes in the immune system.

The risk to the mother of complications from influenza increases in the later stages of pregnancy. Infection in the third trimester of pregnancy appears to be the most dangerous for the pregnant woman.

In Australia and New Zealand, the flu season is considered to be between May to October, usually peaking by the end of August

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists strongly endorse routine influenza vaccination of pregnant women and women planning pregnancy.

WHY ARE PREGNANT WOMEN DIFFERENT?

Pregnant women are at high risk of severe consequences of influenza infection. This is because there are a number of changes that occur to a woman's body during pregnancy, which may put pregnant women at higher risk of complications from the flu (e.g. changes to lung function, increased cardiac output, increased oxygen consumption, and changes to the immune response).

HOW DO I PROTECT AGAINST THE FLU?

The best way to protect pregnant women against flu is by vaccinating against it. Vaccination needs to be given each year because the viruses are always changing. Vaccinating against flu during pregnancy provides protection for the mother and the newborn baby for the first six months after birth.

IS THE FLU VACCINATION SAFE?

The influenza vaccine is safe for pregnant women in all trimesters, with no unusual patterns in pregnancy or fetal outcomes being observed in vaccine adverse events reports.



HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Free influenza vaccine is available to all pregnant women in Australia and New Zealand.

To receive the influenza vaccination, pregnant women are advised to visit their local GP or immunisation provider. It is important to note that the vaccine is free; however, a consultation fee may apply.

Adapted from:

RANZCOG College Statement. Influenza vaccination in pregnancy (and in women planning pregnancy). November 2015

