

What you need to know about immunisation during pregnancy



Don't want to take this fact sheet with you? Take a photo instead! It's important to keep this information handy.

Immunisation against flu and whooping cough during every pregnancy is recommended and free. It is also recommended that you stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations, particularly if you have any other health conditions.

People who are vaccinated during pregnancy pass immunity on to their pēpi (baby). This means when they're born, they will have some protection until they're old enough to be immunised themselves at 6 weeks. This is especially important for whooping cough. Learn more about immunisation during pregnancy at immunise.health.nz/pregnancy.

The Boostrix vaccine is most effective when given from 16-26 weeks of pregnancy. It is available and free from 13 weeks of every pregnancy.

Having the vaccine well before your due date means that babies who arrive earlier than expected will have received their protection. The Boostrix vaccine protects against three diseases: whooping cough, tetanus and diphtheria.

Whooping cough can be very dangerous to newborns and it is important that a booster vaccine is given with each pregnancy.

The flu vaccine can be given at any stage of your pregnancy

Getting vaccinated against flu during pregnancy reduces the risk of harm to you and your unborn baby. Pregnant people who catch flu during pregnancy have higher rates of pregnancy complications, including premature birth, stillbirth, and babies who are small for gestational age. Aotearoa New Zealand research shows that healthy pregnant people are nearly five times more likely to be admitted to hospital when suffering from flu complications than those who are not pregnant.

The COVID-19 vaccine can be given at any stage of your pregnancy

If you are vaccinated against COVID-19, you're far less likely to fall seriously ill. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is the preferred choice during pregnancy due to lack of safety data for the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine in pregnant people. If you would prefer to have Novavax, talk to your healthcare provider about the benefits and risks.

Getting more than one vaccine

It's safe to have all of these vaccines in the same visit, talk to your healthcare provider if this is an option.

Vaccines protect your whānau

Now's a good time to ask your whānau about their immunisations to make sure everyone has the best protection. Your doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider will be able to tell you which vaccinations your whānau are eligible for or can purchase.

Find out more about whānau immunisation here immunise.health.nz/whanau

To book your whānau for their flu or COVID-19 vaccines visit BookMyVaccine.nz

Please let the vaccinator know if any of the following apply to you/ the person being vaccinated:

- if you have had myocarditis or pericarditis in the past
- currently unwell with a high fever
- taking blood thinning medication or have a bleeding disorder
- if you have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to any vaccine, medicine or anything else
- had any other vaccines in the last week
- if you have diabetes.

Giving consent for a vaccination

Before having your vaccine, the vaccinator will ask if you give consent. You have the right to make an informed choice about your healthcare including immunisations. Before giving consent, the vaccinator will explain to you what the vaccine is for, the risks of having the vaccine, and why it is recommended for you. The vaccinator will explain what to expect after your vaccine and how and where to seek help if you have any concerns. You will receive this information verbally and take this fact sheet home. There will be time to have all your questions answered and you can also request an interpreter if you need one. For more information about giving consent, visit www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/i/informed-consent

Recording your vaccination

Te Whatu Ora records vaccines administered on a centralised database. This allows authorised healthcare professionals to access your vaccine history and keep you up to date with your vaccinations.

After your vaccinations

As with any vaccine, you may experience some side effects. Most are mild, do not last long and happen in the first few days of having the vaccine. Common side effects may include local injection site reactions (pain, redness, swelling and hardening), headache, feeling tired, nausea and chills.

Myocarditis and pericarditis are conditions which are usually caused by viral infections, they are also rare and serious side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines. Your vaccinator will discuss the signs and symptoms with you as well as what to do if you experience any.

When your pēpi arrives

Your baby's first immunisations are due at 6 weeks. Starting immunisations on time provides your pēpi with the best protection from serious illness. Make it easy and enrol them with a health provider early.

You can learn about what immunisations your baby will need and when they are due.

Visit the immunise.health.nz for more information.

Getting vaccinated when you are breastfeeding

These vaccines are recommended to have during pregnancy as they provide the best protection for you and baby. If you miss out on any vaccines while pregnant, they are safe to have while breastfeeding but may no longer be free and will not pass enough immunity to your baby to protect them. This is why it's important to be on time with your baby's vaccinations.



If you have any concerns about your symptoms after your vaccine, talk to your doctor or practice nurse, or call healthline on **0800 611 116** anytime to get advice.

If you have immediate concerns about your safety, call **111** and let them know what vaccines you have received.