

Question: I'm having my baby in February. I'm nervous about taking any medication while I'm pregnant, and that includes vaccines. Is the flu vaccine really safe for me and my baby?

Answer: Yes, the influenza vaccine is safe and recommended for healthy pregnant women. The National Advisory Committee for Immunization (NACI), which makes recommendations for the use of vaccines currently or newly approved for use in humans in Canada, recommends that pregnant women get the flu shot. One of the reasons for the recommendation is that the risk of influenza-related hospitalization increases in the last three months of pregnancy.

A recent study published online on September 17, 2008 in the New England Journal of Medicine reveals that "a single dose of maternal influenza vaccine provides a considerable two-for-one benefit to both mothers and their young infants." This study was conducted by a team led by Dr. Mark C. Steinhoff, of Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health, in Baltimore, Maryland.

This new study lends even greater support to the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (USA) and Canada's NACI, that pregnant women receive the influenza vaccine.



References:

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Public Health Agency of Canada.
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Online at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/08vol34/acs-3/index-eng.php>

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