



Protect yourself and your baby from infections during pregnancy

If you are pregnant, vaccinations against whooping cough, influenza and COVID-19 are recommended to protect both you and your baby. These vaccinations are offered free of charge in all regions. There is also a medicine available to protect infants against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) after birth.

Protection against whooping cough

Whooping cough can cause serious illness in young children. After one or two weeks, coughing may become so intense that the child will make a 'whooping' sound as they struggle for breath between coughing bouts. The disease is highly contagious and can be serious or even fatal for young children. While adults usually experience only mild symptoms, the disease can cause a prolonged, troublesome cough as well as the risk of infecting others, including infants. Although the bacterium that causes whooping cough is present throughout the year, infections peak during late summer and autumn.

Regardless of the time of year, if you are pregnant you are advised to get vaccinated against whooping cough after the 16th week of pregnancy to protect yourself and your child against the disease. When you are vaccinated, the child receives antibodies to whooping cough from you. These antibodies will protect your child against the disease from birth until they are offered vaccination against whooping cough at 3 months of age at a Children's Healthcare Centre (BVC).

Protection against influenza

Seasonal influenza can cause a serious infection if you are pregnant. Influenza viruses mainly spread in autumn and winter so, if you are pregnant, you are advised to get a flu shot in the autumn before the influenza season begins. The vaccine also protects the newborn child against influenza to some extent. The vaccination is given after the 12th week of pregnancy, but can be given throughout pregnancy if necessary.

Protection against COVID-19 for high-risk groups

COVID-19 can cause serious illness in people who belong to a high-risk group, such as those with cardiopulmonary diseases. The disease spreads mainly during autumn and winter. If you are pregnant and belong to a high-risk group, it is therefore important that you get vaccinated against COVID-19 in the autumn before the season begins. The vaccine will also protect your newborn child against COVID-19 to some extent. The vaccination can be given throughout pregnancy to those in a high-risk group.

Protection against RSV

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can cause a severe respiratory infection in young children. To protect infants against RSV, maternity wards offer infants born during autumn and winter immunisation with an antibody that prevents serious infection. These antibodies are highly effective in preventing severe RSV infections that require hospital care. An RSV vaccine is available for pregnant women that also protects infants after birth. This has an equivalent effect to the antibody treatment. At present, the RSV vaccine is not offered free of charge to pregnant women in Sweden.

Vaccines are safe for you and your baby

All vaccines given during pregnancy are well-proven, effective and safe for you and your baby. Serious side effects are very rare.

No vaccine provides 100% protection against a disease. However, if you do become infected despite getting vaccinated, it is highly likely that your symptoms will be milder than they would otherwise have been.

In addition to vaccinations and knowledge about how these diseases spread, good hand hygiene is also important. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use hand sanitiser or an equivalent hand disinfectant. This further reduces the risk of exposing yourself and your child to disease.

If you have any questions or concerns about vaccinations, you can talk to your midwife or health centre.