

# 2022 SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINES FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

## Clinical advice for vaccination providers

Seasonal influenza vaccines are available through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for women in each pregnancy.



## INFLUENZA in pregnancy and newborns

- Antenatal influenza vaccination is recommended to protect both pregnant women and their babies from influenza and its complications.
- Influenza vaccine can be safely given at any stage during pregnancy. Whilst it is best given before the influenza season, it can be given at any time during the season and it will still provide some protection to the mother and protection to the baby for the first few months of life.
- Influenza vaccine can safely be given at the same time as pertussis vaccine and/or COVID-19 vaccine.
- A consistent recommendation from a healthcare professional plays an important role in improving vaccination uptake.

### Available vaccines

In 2022, the following quadrivalent influenza vaccines (QIVs) are available for free through the NIP for pregnant women of any age:

- Afluria Quad® (Seqirus)
- Fluarix Tetra® (GlaxoSmithKline)
- Vaxigrip Tetra® (Sanofi).

### Benefits of vaccination in pregnancy

- Pregnant women are at increased risk of morbidity and mortality from influenza compared with non-pregnant women and are recognised as a priority group for influenza vaccination.
- Babies born to mothers who contract influenza during pregnancy are at higher risk of preterm birth and low birth weight.
- Babies aged less than 6 months are more likely to be hospitalised with influenza than any other age group.
- Vaccination of pregnant women provides protection against influenza for newborn babies by transfer of maternal antibodies across the placenta.
- High levels of maternal antibodies give temporary protection to the baby for the first few months of life.
- Vaccination during pregnancy is estimated to reduce the risk of influenza in babies aged less than 6 months by about half.

### Vaccination timing

- Influenza vaccine is recommended as a single dose at any time (as early as practicable) during each pregnancy.
- It is best given prior to the onset of the influenza season, however can be given at any time during the year. The peak influenza season usually occurs from June to September in most parts of Australia.
- For women who received an influenza vaccine in 2021, revaccinate if the 2022 influenza vaccine becomes available before the end of pregnancy.
- For women who receive an influenza vaccine before becoming pregnant, revaccinate during pregnancy to protect the unborn infant.

- Women who are in their first trimester in the first quarter of 2022 may wish to wait until the 2022 influenza vaccine becomes available, rather than receiving the 2021 influenza vaccine.
- The influenza vaccine can be given at the same time as the pertussis vaccine and/or COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy between 20 and 32 weeks.

### Vaccination safety

- All QIVs currently available for pregnant women in Australia are inactivated vaccines and are safe for use in pregnancy.
- Many large studies have shown no evidence of an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes (such as stillbirth, low birth weight, pre-eclampsia, congenital abnormality, or preterm birth) related to influenza vaccination during pregnancy.
- Expected adverse events, like injection site reactions and fever, do not occur more frequently in pregnant women than in non-pregnant women.
- All QIVs available through the NIP for pregnant women are registered as Category A for pregnancy.

### Further information

- The Australian Immunisation Handbook at [www.immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au](http://www.immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au)
- Department of Health immunisation website at [www.health.gov.au/immunisation](http://www.health.gov.au/immunisation)
- National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance at [www.ncirs.org.au](http://www.ncirs.org.au)

All information in this publication is correct as at March 2022.