

# Patient information

## Vaccinations in pregnancy



**The following vaccinations are recommended in pregnancy to protect the health of you and your baby. The antibodies you get from the vaccinations can help to prevent serious illness and disease by supporting your body's natural defense system. Passing these antibodies to your unborn baby will help protect them in their first few months of life.**



**To book your vaccinations please arrange an appointment with your GP.**

## Seasonal influenza (Flu)

**What:** Flu is a highly infectious disease with symptoms such as fever, chills, aches, pains in the muscles and extreme tiredness, which although serious infection is less common in healthy adults, can still lead to serious health complications.

**Why:** If you catch flu during pregnancy, you are more likely to need admission to hospital than if you get flu when you are not pregnant. You may not be able to fight off infection as easily, and in late pregnancy breathing deeply is harder and can increase risk of infections. If an unborn child catches flu it can lead to premature birth, low birth weight or even death.

**When:** Having a flu vaccination is safe for you and your baby at **any stage of pregnancy**. It is usually available **from the end of September** and takes approximately 14 days to provide protection.

## Whooping cough (pertussis)

**What:** Whooping cough is a highly infectious disease that can be very serious for babies under 1 year. It can cause long bursts of coughing and choking making it hard to breathe. It can last for as long as two or three months and lead to serious complications such as temporary pauses in breathing, weight loss, seizures and encephalitis.

**Why:** The vaccination helps your body produce antibodies to whooping cough which are passed through the placenta to your baby, giving them some protection until their own whooping cough vaccination at eight weeks of age.

**When:** The best time to protect your baby is **between 16 and 32 weeks of pregnancy**. You can have it later, but it may not be as effective. You should have it for every pregnancy you have, even if you had it when you were young.

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

**What:** Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention. Anyone can get sick with COVID-19 and become seriously ill or die at any age.

**Why:** You are at a higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19 if you are pregnant. Most pregnant people who need hospital treatment in the UK have not been vaccinated. The antibodies from the vaccination protect you and your baby against this, along with reducing the risk of stillbirth.

**When:** It is safe to have the vaccination at **any point in pregnancy**. You do not need to delay until after you have given birth. Sometimes, live vaccines are offered if the risk of infection is greater than the risk of the vaccination. Speak to your midwife or GP for further information.

### **Live vaccines include:**

BCG  
MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)  
Oral typhoid  
Oral polio  
Yellow fever.



### **Clinical research**

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email [info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk](mailto:info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk). This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

**If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)**  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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