

Report: Pregnant women need flu shots

September 23 2009

Pregnant women should be sure to get all their flu shots as soon as the vaccines become available this year to protect them against both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 (swine) flu, according to eight leading national maternal and infant health organizations.

The eight organizations - the March of Dimes, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Nurse-Midwives, the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses, the Infectious Disease Society for Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine - today partnered to issue a joint statement because the H1N1 virus has proven to be especially dangerous to pregnant women.

"The normal changes of pregnancy make pregnant women at increased risk of the harmful effects of [flu](#) infection," the groups say.

Some pregnant women may be reluctant to take these shots. But Dr. Jennifer L. Howse, president of the March of Dimes, says, "We urge every pregnant woman to discuss influenza immunization with her health care provider because the risk of serious illness during pregnancy is substantial. It is important to note that the vaccine has been shown to be safe and effective in clinical trials."

In addition to getting immunized before the flu season for both the seasonal and the H1N1 viruses, the groups urge pregnant women to follow good hygiene habits, such as hand-washing and avoiding others

who are sick, to prevent the virus from spreading. Pregnant women who develop flu-like symptoms should quickly contact their health care provider so that they can begin treatment immediately.

H1N1 flu is caused by a virus. In the spring of 2009, many people in Mexico became sick with H1N1 (swine) flu. It spread to several countries, including the United States. Now, the US is taking steps to deal with the first [influenza pandemic](#) in more than 40 years.

Research published Sept. 11, 2009 in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's journal *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, which surveyed [pregnant women](#) in two states, found that women who got a seasonal flu vaccine did so because their [health care](#) provider recommended it.

More information: The complete joint statement can be found here www.marchofdimes.com/aboutus/49267_61363.asp and more information about the H1N1 virus can be found on each of the participating organization's Web site .

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention also has detailed information available at: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu .

Source: March of Dimes Foundation ([news](#) : [web](#))

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