



## January Immunization Newsletter

### 2018–19 Flu Season

On January 11, 2019, the [CDC](#) estimated that so far this flu season, between 6 million and 7 million people have been sick with flu; that up to half of those people have sought medical care for their illness; and that between 69,000 and 84,000 people have been hospitalized from flu. The CDC expects flu activity to continue for weeks. ACOG and the CDC continue to recommend flu vaccination and appropriate use of antiviral medications.

Check the CDC's weekly [FluView](#) reports to learn when and where influenza activity is occurring, what influenza viruses are circulating and what their properties are, and what impact influenza is having on hospitalization and deaths in the United States.

ACOG's [Immunization for Women website](#) has a multitude of resources on influenza and influenza vaccination.

- ACOG's [Influenza Immunization during Pregnancy Tool Kit](#), which includes [FAQs for Patients Concerning Influenza Vaccination During Pregnancy](#)
- ACOG's [Assessment and Treatment for Pregnant Women With Suspected or Confirmed Influenza Algorithm](#)
- [Current vaccination recommendations](#)
- [Resources from ACOG, CDC, and other partner organizations](#)

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### ACOG's Immunization Champion Award

The ACOG Immunization Champion Award is for members who have demonstrated exceptional progress in increasing immunization rates among pregnant women in their communities. Immunization champions are considered leaders in maternal immunization and will be evaluated on their leadership, innovation, collaboration, and educational activities.

The Immunization Champion Award is intended to recognize ob-gyns who are doing an exemplary job by going above and beyond to educate patients and other obstetric care providers and by increasing access to maternal immunizations in their practice or communities or at the national level.

Winners will receive a \$1,500 honorarium and an award to display in their office and will be highlighted in ACOG’s immunization newsletter. Awardees will also be added to ACOG’s [Immunization Champion Honor Roll](#) on ACOG’s [Immunization for Women](#) website.

Nominate yourself or another deserving ACOG member by completing the [nomination application](#) by February 20, 2019.

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## Strategies for Effectively Integrating Immunizations Into Routine Obstetric-Gynecologic Care

ACOG’s new resource, [Strategies for Effectively Integrating Immunizations Into Routine Obstetric-Gynecologic Care](#), suggests ways for you and your staff to optimize your practice’s immunization program and integrate immunizations into routine patient care.

This quick-reference tip sheet highlights four overarching strategies for effectively and efficiently integrating immunizations into your routine patient care.

<b><i>Strategies for Effectively Integrating Immunizations Into Routine Obstetric-Gynecologic Care</i></b>
1. Administer routinely discussed and recommended vaccines, which at a minimum include influenza, Tdap, and HPV.
2. Create a culture of immunization by educating and involving all staff in immunization processes. Delegate the responsibilities of maintaining and championing an immunization program to a team of staff, as appropriate for your practice structure.
3. Develop a standard process for assessing, recommending, administering, and documenting vaccination status of patients.
4. Utilize existing systems and resources to conduct periodic assessment of immunization rates among patients to determine if and where progress is needed.

The strategies detailed in this resource are based on findings from an ACOG adult immunization demonstration project funded through the CDC and were shown to increase patient immunization rates among ob-gyns. Additionally, the tip sheet details potential activities and considerations for successful implementation of each outlined strategy, so practices of varied sizes, staffing levels, and patient populations can identify processes that may work for their unique setting.

Access ACOG’s [Immunization for Women website](#) to learn more about these four strategies.

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## “Outcomes of Infants Born to Women with Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09”

A recent article, “[Outcomes of infants born to women with influenza A\(H1N1\)pdm09](#),” published in *Birth Defects Research*, further reinforces the potential for adverse outcomes to infants whose mothers are infected with influenza during pregnancy.

The article reports pregnancy outcomes from 490 pregnant women who were diagnosed with influenza during the 2009 pandemic. Compared to two different control populations, infants born to women with H1N1 influenza were more likely to be preterm, have a low birth weight, and have a low Apgar score. Pregnant women with influenza who were admitted to an intensive care unit had more severe newborn outcomes.

These findings are consistent with prior publications concerning pregnancy complications associated with maternal influenza. Additionally, research conducted since the last influenza pandemic has shown that these pregnancy complications can be lessened by maternal immunization with the influenza vaccine.

ACOG and the CDC strongly recommend that all persons six months of age and older receive an annual flu shot. It is particularly important for pregnant women to be vaccinated, as they are at increased risk of severe illness related to influenza. A member of ACOG’s Immunization, Infectious Disease, and Public Health Preparedness Expert Work Group, Denise Jamieson, MD, spoke about the importance of the flu vaccine on [NPR](#).

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## January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if health care providers increase HPV vaccination rates in eligible recipients to 80%, it is estimated that an additional 53,000 cases of cervical cancer could be prevented during the lifetime of those younger than 12 years. As a women’s health care provider, you have the power to help protect your patients. ACOG has several [resources](#) related to HPV and HPV vaccination, including clinical guidance, patient education materials, and a downloadable infographic.

- [PA: FDA Approval of 9-valent HPV Vaccine for Use in Women and Men Age 27–45](#)
- [PB 168: Cervical Cancer Screening and Prevention](#)
- [CO 704: Human Papillomavirus Vaccination](#)
- [HPV Vaccination Tool Kit](#)
- [ACOG’s patient education resources on cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination](#)