



IMMUNIZATION *for* WOMEN
Immunization Information for Ob-Gyns and Their Patients

November Immunization Newsletter

2018–19 Influenza Season Kick Off

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) kicked off the 2018–19 influenza season at its [2018 NFID Influenza/Pneumococcal News Conference](#) on September 27, 2018, in Washington, D.C.



Laura E. Riley, MD, chair of obstetrics and gynecology at Weill Cornell Medicine and chair of ACOG's Immunization, Infectious Disease, and Public Health Preparedness Expert Work Group represented ACOG as a featured panelist. Dr. Riley stressed the importance of flu vaccination during pregnancy to protect both mother and baby. In the spirit of NFID's [Leading by Example](#) initiative, Dr. Riley and other news conference panelists and participants rolled up their sleeves to get vaccinated.

A Critical Opportunity: Vaccinating Pregnant Women Against Influenza

During the [2017–18 influenza season](#), 49.1% of pregnant women received influenza vaccination before or during pregnancy. This is a decrease from the 2016–17 season, when 53.6% of women reported receiving an influenza vaccination before or during pregnancy.

Healthcare providers play a key role in increasing flu vaccination coverage among pregnant women. Pregnant women who reported receiving a provider recommendation for and an offer of flu vaccination had higher vaccination coverage (63.8%) than pregnant women who reported receiving a recommendation but no offer (37.6%) or who reported receiving no recommendation (9%).

A new study coauthored by the CDC and published in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, [Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness in Preventing Influenza-Associated Hospitalizations during Pregnancy: A Multi-Country Retrospective Test Negative Design Study, 2010–16](#), documented that getting a flu shot reduced a pregnant woman's risk of being hospitalized from flu by 40%. The study also demonstrated that getting the vaccine was equally protective over all three trimesters and delivery.

While previous studies have shown that a flu shot can reduce a pregnant woman's risk of flu illness, this is the first study to document that vaccination also protected against hospitalization.

ACOG recommends that ob-gyns give a clear and direct flu vaccination recommendation to all patients, particularly those who are or will be pregnant during the flu season.

New! Assessment and Treatment of Pregnant Women With Suspected or Confirmed Influenza

ACOG's Committee Opinion, [Assessment and Treatment of Pregnant Women With Suspected or Confirmed Influenza](#) emphasizes the importance of recognizing the symptoms of influenza, assessing severity, and prescribing safe and effective antiviral therapy for pregnant women with influenza. This document includes an [algorithm](#) designed to aid practitioners in promptly assessing and treating suspected or confirmed influenza in pregnant women and can be used for telephone triage.

Help Your Patients Fight Flu Season

Interim Executive Vice President and CEO Dr. Lisa Hollier, MPH, has released a [new blog](#) that drives home the dangers of the flu for patients — especially pregnant patients — and reminds ob-gyns that being prepared for flu season is crucial. The blog highlights the importance of prevention with a reminder that the flu vaccine is safe for pregnant patients and can and should be administered to all patients over the age of six months. Additionally, Dr. Hollier provides a list of resources that will help guide ob-gyns through the process of assessing, evaluating, and treating the flu. [Read the blog for more information](#) on simple, effective ways to protect yourself, your staff, and your patients from the flu.

ACOG's Fight against Flu

As part of ACOG's continuing efforts to increase influenza vaccination rates, ACOG encourages all District and Section leaders to use their annual meetings as an opportunity to remind members about the importance of flu vaccination.

ACOG's [Immunization for Women website](#) is your go-to resource for influenza immunization resources.

CDC's 2018–19 Flu Season Campaign Tool Kit

CDC's seasonal flu vaccination campaign materials are available to assist partners in communicating about the importance of vaccination. This [digital tool kit](#) includes details on events and activities, sample social media and newsletter content, graphics, web assets, and media prep material. This material is downloadable, shareable, and some of the material is customizable.

[National Influenza Vaccination Week](#), December 2–8, 2018, focuses on highlighting the importance of influenza vaccination.

Vaccine Administration e-Learn

Proper vaccine administration is critical for ensuring that vaccines are both safe and effective. Of the average 36,000 reports received annually by the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](#), about 1,500 are directly related to administration errors.

The [e-Learn on vaccine administration](#) is a free, interactive, online educational program that provides comprehensive training, using videos, job aids, and other resources to accommodate a variety of learning styles and offers continuing education for those who complete the training.

For more information, please contact nipinfo@cdc.gov.