October Immunization Newsletter

CDC Vital Signs Report on Vaccinating Pregnant Women

This month, the CDC released the MMWR Vital Signs report Burden and Prevention of Influenza and Pertussis Among Pregnant Women and Infants—United States and a communication package of talking points and resources to assist providers in their efforts to protect women and their newborns from influenza and pertussis. This edition of Vital Signs presents the CDC’s latest findings on rates of flu and Tdap vaccination among pregnant women and related measures.

Key points from the Vital Signs report include:

- As of April 2019, maternal influenza and Tdap vaccination coverage rates were 53.7% and 54.9%, respectively.
- Only one in three U.S. pregnant women receive both flu and Tdap vaccines.
- Women with flu are more than twice as likely to be hospitalized if they are pregnant. Pregnant women accounted for 24–34% of influenza-associated hospitalizations during the 2017–18 flu season.
- 69% of reported pertussis deaths occur in infants less than two months old, the age at which babies receive their first whooping cough vaccine.
- For both vaccines, vaccination coverage was lower among non-Hispanic black pregnant women and those of lower socioeconomic status.
- Common reasons reported for not being vaccinated were concerns about effectiveness of the vaccine (influenza), not knowing the vaccine was needed in each pregnancy (Tdap), and concerns about safety risks posed to the fetus (both influenza and Tdap).

Recommendations from health care providers are one of the strongest influences on patient acceptance of vaccination. The CDC and ACOG recommend that all pregnant women receive flu vaccine at any time during pregnancy and the Tdap vaccine as early in the 27–36-weeks-of-gestation window as possible.

Maternal Immunization Grand Rounds: Current Status and Future Directions

In a recent CDC Public Health Grand Rounds, Laura E. Riley, MD, chair of ACOG’s Immunization, Infectious Disease, and Public Health Preparedness (IIDPHP) Expert Work Group, and Denise Jamieson, MD, MPH, an IIDPHP Expert Work Group member, presented alongside other experts on the current status and future directions of maternal immunization. This event highlighted the importance of pregnant women routinely receiving the Tdap and influenza vaccines to protect women and their infants. Drs. Riley and Jamieson reviewed data on the burden of influenza and pertussis during pregnancy including highlights of new maternal vaccines in development.

Visit the CDC’s Public Health Grand Rounds page to watch this session and learn more about the benefits of maternal immunization.

New! Maternal Immunization Patient Education Tools
Enhance your practice website, patient portal, and social media pages with ACOG’s new maternal immunization patient education tools.

Use these free graphics to assist your practice in communicating with patients outside of the office setting about the importance of Tdap and flu vaccination during pregnancy.

2019–20 Flu Vaccination Campaign Kickoff

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) kicked off the 2019–20 flu vaccination season with the 2019 NFID Influenza/Pneumococcal News Conference on September 26, 2019, in Washington, D.C. New data from a recent NFID survey of vaccination attitudes and behaviors was presented, revealing that only 52% of U.S. adults plan to get vaccinated against influenza this season and nearly 60% of high-risk individuals reported that they have never been advised to get vaccinated against pneumococcal disease.

During the press conference, the nation’s leading experts promoted the CDC Take 3 approach to flu prevention, emphasizing the importance of getting the flu vaccine each year, taking everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antiviral drugs if prescribed by a physician. The event also highlighted that flu season is an opportune time to make sure that you and your patients are up to date on pneumococcal vaccines.

Dr. Riley represented ACOG at the NFID Influenza/Pneumococcal News Conference and received her annual flu vaccine during the event.

2019–20 Flu Season Campaign Tool Kits

The CDC released two new tool kits for the 2019–20 flu season to assist health care providers and other partners in communicating about the importance of annual influenza vaccination.

The CDC’s HCP Fight Flu Tool Kit provides healthcare professionals with the resources to make strong vaccine recommendations, facilitate valuable conversations with patients, and improve influenza
vaccination. The 2019–20 flu season Digital Media Tool Kit includes details on events, print-ready materials, sample social media and newsletter content, videos, web resources, and a flu vaccine finder. This material can be downloaded and shared on practice websites and social media platforms, and key materials can be customized with practice-specific messages.

Maternal #HowIRecommend Vaccination Video Series

When it comes to vaccination, patients trust the expertise and recommendations of their health care providers more than anyone else. The CDC developed the maternal #HowIRecommend video series to highlight how women’s health care providers are making strong vaccine recommendations and answering patients’ questions.

These videos feature expert clinicians discussing how they make effective flu and Tdap vaccination recommendations to pregnant patients. Find #HowIRecommend videos featuring Kevin Ault, MD, FACOG, voting member of the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and IIDPHP Expert Work Group member, on the CDC’s YouTube channel.

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409 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024-2188, ATTN: Communications and Marketing