



Winter vaccines in pregnancy

Frequently asked questions, answered.



Should I get the flu and seasonal COVID-19 vaccines while I'm pregnant?



Pregnant women are at **higher risk** of getting seriously ill from flu and COVID-19 and during the pandemic Black women were 3.7 times more likely to die compared to White women. There is good evidence that pregnant women have a higher chance of developing complications if they get flu, particularly in the later stages of pregnancy. One of the most common complications of flu is bronchitis, a chest infection that can become serious and develop into pneumonia.



If you have flu or COVID-19 while you're pregnant, it could cause your baby to be born prematurely or have a low birthweight, it increases the need for admission to intensive care for mum and baby and may even lead to stillbirth or death. If you get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, the symptoms are likely to be **more serious**.



Getting your winter **vaccines is the safest and most effective** way for women to protect themselves and their babies against flu and COVID-19 and also reduces the risk of having a stillbirth. The antibodies your body produces in response to the vaccine can also give your baby protection against flu and COVID-19 which lasts for the first few months of their lives.



It's safe to have the flu and COVID-19 vaccines during any stage of pregnancy, from the first few weeks up to your expected due date. It's also safe for women who are breastfeeding to have the vaccines. There's no evidence flu and COVID-19 vaccination increases the risk of having a miscarriage, pre-term birth or other complications in your pregnancy. It's strongly recommended that you get vaccinated against flu and COVID-19 ahead of winter to **protect you and your baby**.

Can I get the flu and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time while pregnant?

It's safe to receive the flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time. You may be offered them at the same time or you may be offered, or to decide to have them, separately. Where possible, we encourage you to get both vaccines in the same appointment to save you time and ensure you are protected against both viruses. If this is not possible, we encourage you to get each vaccine as soon as you can, rather than waiting to get both at the same time. If you receive both vaccines in one appointment but originally booked two, please do cancel the other appointment so that it becomes available for someone else.

Can I have the flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time as the whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine?

Yes, you can have the vaccines at the same time as the whooping cough vaccine (pertussis vaccine), but do not delay your winter vaccines so you can have all of the vaccines at the same time. Pregnant women are at risk of severe illness from flu and COVID-19 at any stage of pregnancy, so you need to have the vaccines as soon as possible. The best time to get vaccinated against whooping cough is from 16 weeks up to 32 weeks of pregnancy. If you miss having the vaccine for any reason, you can still have it up until you go into labour.

What winter vaccines will I receive while pregnant?

You will be offered a vaccine that is suitable for you. If you have any questions, you can discuss these with your GP practice or maternity team.

When can I receive the flu and COVID-19 vaccines?

You can book the COVID-19 vaccines and flu vaccinations now through your GP practice or local pharmacy. The COVID-19 vaccine is available **up until 15 December**. There may be opportunities to have the vaccine after this date, but we would encourage you to book during this time if possible. The flu vaccine is available until the end of March 2024 if you find out that you are pregnant later in the flu season.

Find out more here: [nhs.uk/seasonalvaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/seasonalvaccinations).



About London Legacy Health Equity Partnership (LHEP)

LHEP is an NHS-funded, multi-stakeholder programme for London that builds on lessons learnt from COVID and seeks to mitigate health inequalities in screening, immunisations and access to health. LHEP focuses on innovative and sustainable approaches developed and delivered in collaboration with London communities and with London health partners including NHSE, UK Health Security Agency, Office for Health Improvements and Disparities, the Greater London Authority, Association of Directors of Public Health and London Councils.

About inspire

The London inspire Programme is a ground-breaking programme developed to raise awareness and promote targeted health interventions aimed at reducing the staggering health inequalities faced by Black people in London. The programme seeks to raise awareness but more importantly mobilise Black Londoners to proactively tackle the challenges resulting in a healthier Black Caribbean and African community.

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