

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Pregnant Mothers Urged to Get Flu Shot
Pregnant moms at higher risk to get the flu

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Division of Immunization Services is urging pregnant women in West Virginia to get a flu shot to protect themselves and their unborn babies against the flu.

According to the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only about half of pregnant women nationally get vaccinated. That figure is the same in West Virginia. Dr. Letitia Tierney, Commissioner of the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health and State Health Officer, said “This preventive measure is especially important for pregnant women because the flu can be a serious illness. I strongly encourage pregnant woman to get the flu shot now as it will also provide some protection for the baby after birth.”

Pregnant women have a higher risk for getting the flu due to changes in their immune system during pregnancy. This can result in serious problems for the unborn baby, including premature labor and delivery. Fever in early pregnancy also can lead to birth defects.

The flu vaccine can be given during any trimester and also protects the baby during the first few months of life. Once the baby is born, breastfeeding will help the baby stay healthy during flu season. However, the nasal spray flu vaccine is not recommended for pregnant women as it is a live attenuated vaccine.

Pregnant mothers who get flu-like symptoms should contact their health care provider immediately.

Pregnant women also need to be protected against pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough. Jeff Neccuzi, Director of the Division of Immunization Services, says, “Pertussis can be serious for babies and a Tdap shot will protect pregnant mothers during pregnancy and will protect both mom and baby after the birth.”

To learn more about vaccinations, visit www.immunization.wv.gov.

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