

Receiving Tdap vaccine during pregnancy safe and effective

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Although a very high percentage of children in the United

States receive a vaccination protecting them against pertussis, cases of pertussis have been on the rise. And infants younger than six months who are too young to receive the vaccine are at greatest risk of the disease, accounting for about 90 percent of all pertussis deaths. A [new study](#) ^[1] published in *JAMA* found that babies born to pregnant women who receive the Tdap vaccine during their third trimester actually have higher concentrations of vaccine-induced pertussis antibodies at birth and at age two months, compared to those mothers who received a placebo at that time.

Researchers from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston led by Dr. Flor M. Munoz analyzed data from 48 pregnant women; Thirty-three of those women received the TDap vaccine and fifteen of those women were given a placebo at 30 to 32 weeks gestation. There were no reported serious Tdap-associated adverse reactions in those women who received the vaccine (minor injection-site reactions occurred equally in both groups). And in fact, receiving the vaccine in the third trimester may actually have a protective effect on the infant, as increased levels of antibodies result in increased protection from pertussis.

According to the authors, Further research is needed to provide definitive evidence of the safety and efficacy of Tdap immunization during pregnancy.

ACSH s Dr. Elizabeth Whelan adds, Although this was a small study, the results support prior research that vaccines are not harmful to pregnant women or their unborn babies. In fact, this study indicates that vaccines are extremely beneficial when received during pregnancy. Due to the fact that infants younger than six months cannot receive the vaccine, this finding could potentially save many lives.

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[1] <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1866102&resultClick=24>