

Pregnant women, get vaccinated! For your sake, and your baby's too

By ACSH Staff — August 5, 2015



^[1]In a recent *New York Times* [column](#) ^[2], Jane Brody encourages

pregnant women to get vaccinated, both for their own health and for the benefit of their newborn babies.

She first condemns the anti-vaccination movement, citing it as a reason why many pregnant women skip vaccinations: Most women now of childbearing age are too young to have witnessed the harm associated with these infections before there were vaccines to prevent them that could be administered before or during pregnancy. Far too many have succumbed to fear-mongering by people who wrongly believe vaccines do more harm than good. Experts are especially alarmed by the fact that, unlike with other aspects of medical care, highly educated people are most likely to resist vaccination.

Anti-vaxxers somehow fail to acknowledge the monumental benefits of vaccines for public health: According to the CDC, from 1994 through 2013, vaccines have prevented about 730,000 deaths, 21 million hospitalizations and 300 million visits to the doctors offices.

But it's not just children who benefit from vaccinations. Getting vaccinated while pregnant is a two-for-one benefit that protects both the mother and her baby. Babies are protected for months after birth by antibodies formed in pregnant women who are immunized.

One caveat: women should avoid getting vaccines made from live viruses while pregnant, but should receive the flu shot and the tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (TDAP) vaccine both of which are safe for pregnant women as they do not contain live viruses, weakened or otherwise. MMR vaccine (measles-mumps-rubella) contains a live virus, and therefore women should get the MMR vaccine a month or more before getting pregnant.

Infants less than 6 months old who are too young to be vaccinated are 60 percent less likely to get the flu if their mothers are immunized, yet only about half of pregnant women get the flu shot.

Too many women go through pregnancy unprotected by readily available vaccines that can prevent irreversible harm to the woman, her unborn child or infant before the baby is old enough to be immunized directly, Brody writes.

For more information on the recommended vaccinations for pregnant women, see the CDC's [website](#) [3] on the topic.

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Links

[1] <http://images.freeimages.com/images/previews/b29/pregnant-1430466.jpg>

[2] http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/08/03/pregnancy-is-the-best-time-for-some-vaccines/?_r=0

[3] <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/pregnant.html>