



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Protecting Babies from Flu

Influenza Vaccination Coverage Among Pregnant Women — 29 States and New York City, 2009–10 Season

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

One of the best ways a pregnant woman can take care of her unborn child is by taking care of herself. Because expectant women are at increased risk for severe complications from influenza, CDC recommends that they get an annual flu vaccine.

Dr. Indu Ahluwalia is an epidemiologist with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of pregnant women receiving the flu vaccine. Welcome to the show, Indu.

[Dr. Ahluwalia] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Indu, when exactly is the flu season?

[Dr. Ahluwalia] Generally, the flu season lasts anywhere from October through late May and it is unpredictable.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is a pregnant woman more susceptible to the flu?

[Dr. Ahluwalia] Well, changes in the immune system during pregnancy can make pregnant women more susceptible to the flu. This can increase their risk for severe complications from influenza, and that is why it is important for pregnant women to get vaccinated.

[Dr. Gaynes] At what point during the pregnancy should a woman get the flu vaccine?

[Dr. Ahluwalia] A pregnant woman can get the flu vaccine any time during her pregnancy.

[Dr. Gaynes] Indu, will the vaccine protect the unborn child?

[Dr. Ahluwalia] Yes. It will protect both the mother and the child, particularly the child up until six months of age when they can get their own vaccine.

[Dr. Gaynes] What percentage of pregnant women get the flu vaccine?

[Dr. Ahluwalia] Prior to the 2009-2010 influenza season, the coverage was quite low. Right now, we're seeing about (a) 50 percent coverage rate and we would like that to be higher and we have a long ways to go.

[Dr. Gaynes] Indu, where can listeners get more information about the flu vaccine?

[Dr. Ahluwalia] Listeners can get more information by going to www.cdc.gov/flu.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Indu. I've been talking today with Dr. Indu Ahluwalia of CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion about the importance of pregnant women getting the flu vaccine.

Remember, the flu vaccine is safe to be administered at any point during pregnancy and can protect both mom and baby from getting the flu. If you are expecting or planning a pregnancy, ask your health care provider about getting the flu vaccine.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.