



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Mothers Against Flu

Influenza Vaccination Coverage Among Pregnant Women — United States, 2011-2012

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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.

It's important for everyone age six months and older to get an annual flu vaccine, but it's critical for women who are either pregnant or plan to get pregnant during flu season, which can run from October through May.

Dr. Denise Jamieson is a medical officer with CDC's Division of Reproductive Health, and she's joining us today to discuss the importance of pregnant women getting the flu vaccine. Welcome to the show, Denise.

[Dr. Jamieson] Thank you.

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

[Dr. Jamieson] The flu season is somewhat unpredictable but it can begin as early as October and last until as late as May.

[Dr. Gaynes] So are pregnant women more likely to get the flu?

[Dr. Jamieson] Well, it's not clear that they're more likely to get the flu, but once they do get the flu, they're more likely to have severe complications, including hospitalization and death.

[Dr. Gaynes] What impact can influenza have on the unborn child?

[Dr. Jamieson] Well, influenza may increase the risk of miscarriage and increase the risk that a baby may be born too early or too small. More importantly, we're really worried about the effect on the mom. Pregnant women who get influenza can be severely ill and their risk of hospitalization or death are increased.

[Dr. Gaynes] Does the flu vaccine pose any risks for the mother or the unborn child?

[Dr. Jamieson] The flu vaccine is safe in pregnancy and it's safe for the mother and her unborn child. We've been vaccinating pregnant women for many decades and we have good information that the flu vaccine is safe.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are there any restrictions on when a woman can get vaccinated during pregnancy?

[Dr. Jamieson] No. A woman can be vaccinated at any point during her pregnancy and it's important that she be vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available in her community.

[Dr. Gaynes] Denise, where can listeners get more information about flu vaccination for pregnant women?

[Dr. Jamieson] They can go to www.cdc.gov and in the search box, type 'pregnancy flu vaccine.'

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Denise. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Denise Jamieson about the importance of pregnant women getting the flu vaccine.

Remember, the flu vaccine is both safe and effective in preventing flu and can help protect both the expectant mother and her unborn baby. A pregnant woman can safely get vaccinated at any point during pregnancy. If you are pregnant or plan to get pregnant, ask your health care provider about 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.