

● Prevent to Protect Theme Resources ●

Before and during pregnancy, some infections can increase the risk of birth defects and other health problems. Here are some helpful tips for pregnant women or women planning a pregnancy.

Get vaccinated.

Check with your health care provider to be sure that your flu and whooping cough vaccinations are up-to-date before getting pregnant. Your healthcare provider can also tell you about vaccinations you should receive during pregnancy.

Get the flu shot and whooping cough vaccine.

- The flu and whooping cough can cause serious illness in pregnant women and their developing babies. Getting vaccinated can help protect your child for several months after they are born. Doctors recommend getting the vaccine for whooping cough in your third trimester.
- Getting the flu isn't restricted to flu season. Stay on the safe side and get the flu shot before you become pregnant or as soon as possible after you know you are pregnant.



Become up-to-date with all vaccines before getting pregnant.

- Getting your vaccines can help prevent symptoms related to certain infections, such as fever, which can be harmful to a developing baby. Talk to your doctor to find out what vaccines they recommend you receive before getting pregnant, including the MMR vaccine. Don't forget to encourage other members of your family to get vaccinated too!

Resources for Women/Families

Pregnant Women & Influenza (Flu) | CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/pregnant.htm>

Learn more about flu prevention and pregnant women.

Seasonal Influenza in Pregnancy Fact Sheet | MotherToBaby

<https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/seasonal-influenza-the-flu-pregnancy/>

Read about the known effects of seasonal influenza exposure during pregnancy.

Flu Vaccine Safety and Pregnancy | CDC https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/qa_vacpregnant.htm

Learn more details about the Flu Vaccine including side effects and considerations regarding allergies.

Get the Whooping Cough Vaccine While You Are Pregnant | CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/pregnant/mom/get-vaccinated.html>

Learn more about receiving the whooping cough vaccine during pregnancy.

Vaccinations and Pregnancy | March of Dimes

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/vaccinations-during-pregnancy.aspx>

March of Dimes' guidelines for the vaccines you need before, during, and after pregnancy

Prevent insect bites.

Pregnant women should take steps to reduce their risk of being bitten by a mosquito. Mosquitos can carry several infections, including West Nile virus, Dengue virus, malaria, and Zika virus. Zika infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called microcephaly, a sign of incomplete brain development.

What you can do to prevent insect bites:

Use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) registered insect repellents](#) with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus (paramenthane-3,8-diol).

- Insect repellants prevent bites by making people less attractive to mosquitos and ticks. When used as directed, EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

When mosquitos are active wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

- Mosquitos can carry several infections, including [West Nile virus](#), [Dengue virus](#), [malaria](#), and [Zika virus](#). Ticks can also carry many infections, such as [Lyme disease](#). These infections can be dangerous to your unborn baby. Lyme disease that goes untreated can cause brain, nerve, spinal cord, and heart problems while Zika infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called [microcephaly](#).
- Mosquitos are most active at dusk and dawn while ticks are active at all times of the day, typically in warmer months. Minimizing areas of exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, boots, and hats can help prevent bites.

Consider avoiding travel to areas with Zika virus.

- Because Zika infection during pregnancy can cause severe birth defects, pregnant women should not travel to affected areas. Partners of pregnant women and couples considering pregnancy should know the [risks to pregnancy and take prevention steps](#). All travelers should strictly follow [steps to prevent mosquito bites](#) and [prevent sexual transmission](#) during and after the trip. When traveling to visit friends or family, think about possible health risks during your trip. If Zika is in the area you are visiting, protect yourself and loved ones from mosquito bites.



Resources for Women/Families

Avoid Bug Bites | CDC

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites>

Prevent bug bites-what to know before you go!

Find the Insect Repellent that is Right for You | EPA

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you>

Use the search tool to help you choose the repellent product that is right for you. You can specify the insect, protection time, active ingredient, or other product-specific information.

Zika Virus-Protect yourself & Others | CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/protect-yourself-and-others.html>

Tips to help protect you, your partner, your family, your friends, and your community from Zika.

Avoid Mosquito Bites | CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/stopmosquitoes/index.html>

Feature on preventing diseases like Zika, dengue, and chikungunya that are spread by mosquitoes.

Zika Information for Travel to Areas with a Risk of Zika | MotherToBaby

<https://mothertobaby.org/zika-central-your-1-stop-for-the-latest-information/>

Find current information from the CDC, MotherToBaby and March of Dimes regarding the Zika Virus.

Zika Virus Fact Sheet | MotherToBaby

<https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/zika-virus-pregnancy/>

Contact a MotherToBaby expert regarding the Zika virus.

Women & Their Partners Trying to Become Pregnant | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/women-and-their-partners.html>

Learn about how to prevent Zika virus while trying to become pregnant.

Travel Health Notices | CDC

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

Travel notices are designed to inform travelers and clinicians about current health issues related to specific destinations. Check this list before traveling.

Health Information for Travelers | CDC

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>

Learn actions you can take to stay healthy and safe on your trip.



Practice good hygiene.

Hygiene refers to the activities that help prevent the spread of infections. Personal hygiene can include hand washing, bathing, and brushing your teeth. Practicing good hygiene is one of the simplest steps that women can take to prevent infections. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not maintaining good hygiene.

What you can do to practice good hygiene:

Wash your hands often with soap and water.

- Washing your hands is an easy step that can help prevent infections. Microbes and germs that spread illness can linger on hands after you touch something. To remove as many germs as possible rinse your hands under clean running water, lather with soap (remember to lather both the back and front!), scrub your hands together for 20 seconds, and then rinse with clean running water. Always remember to wash your hands after contact with any bodily fluids, such as saliva or urine.

Avoid putting a young child's cups or pacifiers in your mouth.

- Children's saliva or urine may contain a virus called [cytomegalovirus \(CMV\)](#), which women can pass to their baby during pregnancy. Becoming infected with CMV can increase your developing baby's risk for birth defects. Practicing good hygiene and avoiding bodily fluids can decrease your risk of CMV infection.



Resources for Women/Families

When & How to Wash Your Hands | CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

Learn more about when and how to wash your hands, the importance of using soap and water, and what you can do if soap and clean, running water are not available.

Cytomegalovirus and Pregnancy | March of Dimes

<http://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/cytomegalovirus-and-pregnancy.aspx>

Learn how you can protect yourself from CMV.

Body, Facial, & Dental Hygiene | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/body/index.html>

Learn how keeping your whole body clean can prevent hygiene-related diseases.

Simple Steps to Prevent Infections during Pregnancy | American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/prenatal/Pages/Simple-Steps-to-Prevent-Infections-During-Pregnancy.aspx>

Check out these eleven tips on how to prevent infections during pregnancy.

Talk to your healthcare provider.

Whether you are currently planning a pregnancy or not, talk to your healthcare provider about preconception and reproductive health care. Healthcare providers will tell you what you can do to prevent infections, like influenza, Zika and sexually transmitted diseases (referred to as STIs or STDs), before and during pregnancy.

Consider discussing these topics with your healthcare provider to reduce your risk of getting an infection during pregnancy:

How you can prevent infections, such as Zika virus.

- Ensure you're protecting yourself from all types of infections by talking to your health care provider. They can provide you with the important steps you need to take to prevent infections, such as Zika virus, from affecting you and your developing baby.

How to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STDs).

- Your partner may not show symptoms even when they are infected with certain viruses and STDs. Avoiding sex eliminates your risk of getting an infection, but you can also take action to protect yourself by using condoms and dental dams, which can lower your risk of infection.



Resources for Women/Families

STDs during Pregnancy | CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/pregnancy/stdfact-pregnancy-detailed.htm>

Details on the effects of specific STIs during a woman's pregnancy with links to web pages with additional information.

Group B Strep (GBS) Prevention in Newborns | CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/groupbstrep/about/prevention.html>

Strategies to prevent GBS in newborn infants.

Urinary Tract Infections during Pregnancy | American Academy of Family Physicians

<http://www.aafp.org/afp/2000/0201/p721.html>

Learn more about UTIs during pregnancy.

Zika Virus-Protect Yourself & Others | CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/protect-yourself-and-others.html>

Tips to help protect you, your partner, your family, your friends, and your community from Zika.

Sexually Transmitted Infections | March of Dimes

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/sexually-transmitted-infections.aspx>

Learn how you can protect yourself and your baby from STIs.