

What Pregnant (Or Recently Pregnant) Women Need to Know About 2009 H1N1 Flu (“Swine Flu”)

A pregnant woman who gets flu has a greater chance for serious problems for her unborn baby and herself. Healthy pregnant women have had severe illness from the 2009 H1N1 flu. Compared with people in general, pregnant women with 2009 H1N1 flu are more likely to be admitted to hospitals. Several pregnant women have died. For this reason, CDC advises doctors to give antiviral medicines (Tamiflu® or Relenza®) that treat H1N1 flu to pregnant women who have signs and symptoms of flu.

- ▶ **Prevention.** The flu shot is the best way to protect against getting the flu. Pregnant women should get both the 2009 H1N1 and seasonal flu shots. If a woman has her baby before getting the shots, she should still get both shots. Babies less than 6 months of age cannot get flu shots. Everyone who cares for young babies should get the flu shots too. The everyday precautions listed below help prevent flu, too.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Have your family do the same.
 - Stay away from sick people.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve. Encourage others around you to do the same.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.

- ▶ **Close contact with someone who has the flu.**

If you have close contact with someone who has the flu, call your doctor right away. Sometimes, doctors will give a pregnant woman an antiviral medicine to reduce the chance that she might get sick. At other times, this might not be needed.

- ▶ **Preparation**
 - Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.
 - Talk with your doctor about a plan to get treatment quickly if you are sick with flu symptoms.



▶ **Signs and symptoms of 2009 H1N1 flu.** This flu is similar to regular seasonal flu. The signs and symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Body aches
- Runny or stuffy nose

Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may have some, not all, of these symptoms and still have flu. People may be infected with the flu, including 2009 H1N1 flu and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

▶ **Tests for 2009 H1N1 flu.** Testing isn't needed for most people. If you have flu symptoms, call your doctor right away. Take the medicine your doctor prescribes.

▶ **Effects of 2009 H1N1 flu on pregnant women.** Pregnant women may have a mild illness with H1N1 flu. However, some pregnant women get very sick. Several have died. If you are pregnant and think you have the flu, call your doctor right away. Take the medicine your doctor prescribes.

▶ **Recently given birth or lost a pregnancy.** Women who have given birth or lost a pregnancy in the past two weeks also can get sick very quickly. Be sure to use everyday precautions. If you get sick with the flu, call you doctor right away. Take the medicine your doctor prescribes.

▶ **Fever in a pregnant woman.** Be sure you have a thermometer, and know how to use it. Treat fever with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) right away. Fever can harm your unborn baby.

▶ **Antiviral medicines.** Tamiflu® is the best medicine to treat 2009 H1N1 flu in a pregnant woman at any stage during pregnancy. Not everyone needs antiviral medicines, but if you are pregnant and have the flu, call your doctor right away. Take the medicine your doctor prescribes.

▶ **Breastfeed, if possible.** Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. Babies who are breastfed get sick from infections like the flu less often and less severely than babies who are not breastfed. You can breastfeed even if you have just gotten flu shots.

- You can breastfeed even if you are sick and taking Tamiflu® or Relenza®, but you need to take extra care. Pumping and having a healthy adult give your baby the breast milk is a good way to protect your baby, too. See www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/infantfeeding.htm to learn more.
- Flu can be very serious in young babies. If your baby gets sick, call your baby's doctor right away. Talk with your doctor if you get the flu. See www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/infantfeeding.htm to learn more.

Protect Yourself, Protect Your Baby

- ✓ Get your flu shots — pregnant women need both the 2009 H1N1 flu shot and the seasonal flu shot.
- ✓ Take everyday precautions (cover coughs and sneezes, stay away from sick people, wash hands).
- ✓ If you have close contact with someone who likely had the flu, call your doctor.
- ✓ If you start to feel sick, call your doctor right away. Take the medicine your doctor prescribes.
- ✓ Treat fever right away.