

Dear Patient

I am writing to you with an update on antenatal vaccination best practice:

1. Influenza

RANZCOG and similar authorities across the world recommend *Influenza* vaccination for pregnant women. While you and your baby will enjoy an enduring benefit after birth, the major impetus for vaccination is prevention of serious *maternal* morbidity and mortality. In WA we frequently see a second spike in infections in early Spring. Thus, my consistent advice over many years is to be vaccinated late in April or in the first half of May. For the majority of you, this will involve receiving vaccination from either Michelle or Sue in my rooms. If you prefer to see your GP or have the injection at work, then that is also appropriate. I have attached a link to the WA Health guidelines:

[Influenza \(flu\) vaccine in pregnancy \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/influenza-vaccine-in-pregnancy)

2. Pertussis

It remains routine practice to recommend Whooping Cough vaccination between 20 and 32 weeks gestation. Typically, I arrange for you to receive the vaccine from Michelle or Sue at your 24 week visit.

Vaccinating a pregnant woman provides 'passive immunisation' to your baby, i.e. protective antibodies that you make against *Pertussis* (as well as Diphtheria and Tetanus) cross the placenta, entering your baby's blood stream, and providing them with protection in the crucial first few months of life.

Remember that other family members do not need to be vaccinated if they have received a vaccine in the last 5 to 10 years.

3. COVID-19

Probably about 80 *per cent* of you now enjoy the protection of hybrid immunity against COVID-19 disease, having both acquired wild SARS-CoV-2 infection *and* being further protected by having received three doses of mRNA vaccine.

Pregnancy is not considered a risk factor if:

- you do not have any other risk factors for serious illness
- you have already received 3 doses of a COVID-19.

Thus, unless you have a chronic health condition, e.g. asthma, auto-immune disease, or have not had a third dose, there is no current recommendation to have a pre-winter booster. You should consider it and I have enclosed a link to the Government website if it helps your decision-making. For those of you who want or need to have a booster, you will have to make arrangements through your GP.

[Pregnancy and COVID-19 | healthdirect](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/pregnancy-and-covid-19)

As always, your antenatal visits present an opportunity to answer questions about the care that I provide you with, including the importance of preventive vaccinations.

Yours sincerely