



# PREGNANT WOMEN

## **What should I do if I am pregnant and I get the flu?**

Call your health care provider right away if you have flu symptoms or if you have close contact with someone who has the flu. Pregnant women who get sick with H1N1 can have serious health problems. They can get sicker than other people who get H1N1. Some pregnant women who have H1N1 have had early labor and severe pneumonia. Some have died. If you are pregnant and have symptoms of the flu, take it very seriously. Call your health care provider right away for advice.

## **What can I do to protect myself, my baby and my family?**

Getting a flu shot is the very best way to protect against the flu. Talk with your health care provider about getting a seasonal flu shot and an H1N1 flu shot. You will need both flu shots this year to be fully protected against flu. You should get both shots as soon as they are available to protect you and your baby. The seasonal flu shot has been shown to protect both the mother and her baby (up to 6 months old) from flu-like illness.

Talk with your health care provider right away if you have close contact with someone who has H1N1 flu. You might need to take medicine to reduce your chances of getting the flu. Your doctor may prescribe anti-viral medications to help prevent H1N1. To prevent flu, you would take a lower dose of the antiviral medicine for 10 days.

## **Is it safe for pregnant women to get a flu shot?**

The seasonal flu shot has been given to millions of pregnant women over many years. Flu shots have not been shown to cause harm to pregnant women or their babies. The 2009 H1N1 flu shot is made in the same way and in the same places as the seasonal flu shot. It is very important for pregnant women to get both the seasonal flu shot and the 2009 H1N1 flu shot. Pregnant women should NOT get the H1N1 nasal spray vaccine or the seasonal flu nasal spray (FluMist) vaccine.

## **Who else should get a flu shot?**

Anybody who will be taking care of babies younger than 6 months old should get a seasonal flu shot and an H1N1 shot to help protect the infant against the flu. This includes all household contacts and caregivers.

## **What else can I do to protect myself and my baby?**

Take these everyday steps to help prevent the spread of germs and protect your health and the health of your family:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand rub can be used.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Pay close attention to your body and how you feel. If you think you have the flu, call your health care provider right away.
- If you are pregnant and you live with or have close contact with someone who has H1N1, call your health care provider.
- Plan for someone else to take care of a sick family member.
- Stock up on household, health, and emergency supplies, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), water, and non-perishable foods.

*continued on next page*

For more information, contact your local public health department or visit [www.FightTheFluMO.com](http://www.FightTheFluMO.com)

Oct 09v2

**FIGHT**  
**THE FLU**

## **What are the symptoms of seasonal flu and H1N1?**

You may have the flu if you have some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or more (not everyone with the flu will have a fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headaches
- Chills
- Tiredness
- Diarrhea and vomiting (some people)

## **How is 2009 H1N1 flu treated?**

2009 H1N1 flu is treated with antiviral medications like as Tamiflu® (oseltamivir) or Relenza® (zanamivir). Antiviral drugs are prescription pills, liquids or an inhaled powder that fight against the flu by keeping the germs from growing in your body. These medicines work best if they are taken as soon as you have symptoms of the flu. So it is important that you call your doctor as soon as you feel flu-like symptoms.

If your doctor prescribes an antiviral to treat your flu, you will need to take it for 5 days. The medicine can make you get better faster and make your symptoms milder.

At this time, there have been no reports to show that antiviral medications cause harm to a pregnant woman or her unborn baby. Flu can cause serious illness and even death in pregnant women. Taking antiviral medicine can help protect you.

Antiviral medicines can be taken at any stage during pregnancy.

Treat your fever right away. Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is best for a pregnant woman to use to reduce a fever. Drink plenty of fluids to replace those you lose when you are sick.

If you have had close contact with someone who is sick with the flu, your doctor may prescribe Tamiflu® or Relenza® to help prevent 2009 H1N1 flu. To prevent flu, you would take a lower dose of the medicine for 10 days.

## **When should I get emergency medical care?**

If you have any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- A high fever that is not responding to Tylenol®
- Decreased or no movement of your baby

## **How should I feed my baby if I am sick?**

If you can, breastfeed. Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. There are many ways that breastfeeding and breast milk protect your baby's health. Babies who are breastfed get sick from infections like the flu less often and less severely than babies who are not breastfed.

Flu can be very serious in young babies. You do not have to stop breastfeeding if you have the flu, but you have to be careful to protect your baby from getting sick. Learn more by reading "Feeding Your Baby."