Postpartum Vaccinations

Parents and close contacts of newborns need to be up to date on vaccinations to help prevent passing certain illnesses to the baby. The following vaccines are recommended (if you have not already received them) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention after the baby is born and before discharge from the hospital.

Your checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes – Encourage any other adults who may have close contact with your baby to be vaccinated.</th>
<th>No – Ask your doctor if you should receive the Tdap vaccine after delivery.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you been vaccinated against pertussis? In other words, have you received the tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your prenatal lab work show you are immune to rubella (German measles)? Your doctor will know this.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No – Ask your doctor if you should receive the MMR vaccine after delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had chicken pox (diagnosed by a doctor) or received two doses of varicella vaccine?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No – Ask your doctor if you should receive the varicella vaccine after delivery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine

This vaccine helps prevent the spread of pertussis (“whooping cough”), a contagious infection that can cause severe complications in infants, such as pneumonia and in some cases death. Babies often catch it from someone in their household.

Who should receive the Tdap vaccine?

- Any adult (parent, grandparent, child care provider, etc.) younger than age 65, who is in close contact with an infant less than 1 year old and has never received the Tdap vaccine should have it. Ideally, the vaccine should be given at least one month before contact with the infant.
- When possible, women should receive the Tdap vaccine before becoming pregnant. If you have not received Tdap, even if you’re breastfeeding, **ask your doctor if you should receive this vaccine before leaving the hospital**.
- This vaccine also replaces your next routine tetanus-diphtheria (Td) booster shot. It can be given less than 10 years from the time the last tetanus shot was received.

Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine

This vaccine can prevent the spread of rubella (“German measles”), a virus that can cause rash, fever and joint pain. During pregnancy, rubella can cause miscarriage, premature birth or other birth defects including deafness, developmental or cognitive delays. This vaccine also helps prevent measles and mumps. At least one dose is recommended for anyone born after 1957 who has not had these diseases or the vaccine before.

Who should receive the MMR vaccine?

- Women who are not immune to rubella virus (your prenatal lab work will tell your doctor this) should receive the vaccine before becoming pregnant, when possible.
- Pregnant women and those planning on becoming pregnant within four weeks of receiving the vaccine should wait until after the baby is born to receive this vaccine.
- If you have not received MMR, even if you’re breastfeeding, **ask your doctor if you should receive it before leaving the hospital**.

Have you been vaccinated against pertussis? In other words, have you received the tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine?

- Yes – Encourage any other adults who may have close contact with your baby to be vaccinated.
- No – Ask your doctor if you should receive the Tdap vaccine after delivery.

Have you ever had chicken pox (diagnosed by a doctor) or received two doses of varicella vaccine?

- Yes
- No – Ask your doctor if you should receive the varicella vaccine after delivery.
Varicella (“chicken pox”) vaccine
This vaccine can help prevent giving chickenpox to your baby. Chicken pox can cause a rash, itching and tiredness. The illness may be more severe in infants, sometimes leading to skin infections, pneumonia, meningitis, brain damage and death. In some cases, infection with varicella during the first half of pregnancy can cause birth defects.

Who should receive the varicella vaccine?
• Women who are not immune to varicella virus (your medical history and prenatal lab work will tell your doctor this) should receive the vaccine before becoming pregnant, when possible.

• Pregnant women and those planning on becoming pregnant within four weeks of receiving the vaccine should wait until after the baby is born to receive this vaccine.

• If you have not received the varicella vaccine, ask your doctor if you should receive the vaccine before leaving the hospital. A second dose is needed four- to eight-weeks after the first dose.

These vaccines are safe while breastfeeding. If you have any questions about these vaccines, feel free to ask your doctor.