

BRIEFING NOTE

County Durham Immunisation Board



Winter vaccinations in pregnancy

Version 2. January 2022

The County Durham Immunisation Board is asking all healthcare professionals to continue to promote the importance of both Covid-19 and flu vaccinations to pregnant woman.

A new advertising campaign, launched on 10 January over social media and radio, is urging all pregnant women to **Get Boosted Now** (resources at <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/covid-19-vaccine/resources/pregnancy-vaccine-and-booster-social-media-assets/>; press release at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-campaign-launched-urging-pregnant-women-to-get-boosted-now>)

National data shows that of those pregnant women in hospital with symptomatic Covid-19, 96% are unvaccinated.

Only 49%¹ of pregnant women have received their flu vaccination in County Durham.

This briefing describes key messages and resources that emphasize the importance of encouraging all pregnant women to receive their Covid-19 and flu vaccinations this winter.

Covid-19 vaccination

Key messages

- The vaccines are safe, and the risks posed by Covid-19 are far greater.
- Nearly 1 in 5 Covid-19 patients who are most critically ill are pregnant women who have not been vaccinated.
- No fully vaccinated pregnant women were admitted to intensive care with Covid-19 in England between February and the end of September 2021.
- Data from the UK Obstetric Surveillance System shows 96.3% of pregnant women admitted to hospital with Covid-19 symptoms between May and October 2021 were unvaccinated.
- Around 1 in 5 women who are hospitalised with the virus need to be delivered preterm to help them recover, and 1 in 5 of their babies need care in the neonatal unit.
- The latest data from the UKHSA shows that Covid-19 vaccination provides strong protection for pregnant women against the virus. It also shows the vaccines are safe for pregnant women, with similar birth outcomes for those who had the vaccine and those who had not.

¹ Figure correct beginning January 2022

Resources

- Advertising campaign over social media and radio urging pregnant women to **Get Boosted Now**. 10 Jan (resources at <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/covid-19-vaccine/resources/pregnancy-vaccine-and-booster-social-media-assets/>; press release at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-campaign-launched-urging-pregnant-women-to-get-boosted-now>)
- Unvaccinated mothers urge pregnant women to get jabbed: Powerful new video shows their experiences of severe Covid-19 during pregnancy. DHSC press release 4 Dec. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/unvaccinated-mothers-urge-pregnant-women-to-get-jabbed> (Short film at <https://vimeo.com/651997011/eca588cae9>)
- Short films answering common questions about Covid-19 vaccine on pregnancy, breastfeeding, fertility, and women's health; and doctors share their experience of treating pregnant women with Covid-19. PHE 3 Dec. <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/covid-19-vaccine/resources/pregnancy-q-and-explainer-videos/>
- Pregnant women urged to get Covid-19 vaccine following new UK safety data. DHSC press release 25 Nov. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pregnant-women-urged-to-get-covid-19-vaccine-following-new-uk-safety-data>
- Five reasons to get the Covid-19 vaccine if you're pregnant. UKHSA Blog 26 Aug. <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/26/five-reasons-to-get-the-covid-19-vaccine-if-youre-pregnant/>
- Covid-19 vaccination: women of childbearing age, currently pregnant or breastfeeding. Resources at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-women-of-childbearing-age-currently-pregnant-planning-a-pregnancy-or-breastfeeding>.

Flu vaccination

Key messages

- At the beginning of January, uptake of flu vaccination by pregnant women in County Durham was only 49%.
- Flu infection increases the chances of pregnant women and their babies needing intensive care.
- Pregnant women benefit from the flu vaccine because it can:
 1. reduce their risk of serious complications, such as pneumonia, particularly in the later stages of pregnancy
 2. reduce the risk of miscarriage or having a baby born too soon or with a low birth weight
 3. help protect their baby, who will continue to have some immunity to flu during the first few months of their life
- The flu injection does not contain any live viruses, so it cannot cause flu.

Resources

- Eligible for a free flu vaccine this winter? Don't wait, book it. UKHSA Blog 29 Oct. <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2021/10/29/eligible-for-a-free-flu-vaccine-this-winter-dont-wait-book-it/>
- Regional campaign #DOYOURBIT. <https://www.doyourbit-nenc.co.uk/flu-toolkit-2021>