

## Can I have these vaccines at the same time?

It is safe to have these vaccines at the same time. All vaccines available in New Zealand have been thoroughly assessed for safety and effectiveness.

Flu and covid vaccinations are FREE as soon as you know you are pregnant. The whooping cough vaccine is more effective later in the pregnancy after 16 weeks, so book a date for it now.

## After baby is born

Newborn babies are very vulnerable to sickness until they're fully immunised.

If you were not immunised against some diseases before or during pregnancy, you can get them after your pēpi is born, but there may be a cost.

It's also important that anyone who will be in close contact with your pēpi stays up to date with their immunisations – in particular for flu, measles and whooping cough – to reduce the risk of making pēpi sick before they can get their own immunisations.

## Getting ready for your baby's first immunisations

Your baby's first immunisations are due at 6 weeks so make sure you enrol them with a doctor early.

If you need help with enrolment, your midwife, the hospital, or your Well Child Tamariki Ora nurse can help you. They can also help you access immunisations through another healthcare provider, if needed.

If you can't find a doctor to enrol your whānau, you can call the **Vaccination Helpline** on **0800 28 29 26** to be connected to a local immunisation service.



For more information about getting immunised during pregnancy

- talk to your doctor, nurse, local pharmacist or healthcare provider
- call Healthline on **0800 611 116**
- visit [info.health.nz/pregnancy](https://www.health.govt.nz/info.health.nz/pregnancy)



# Protecting you and your pēpi starts during pregnancy

Protecting your baby starts before they are born. There are 3 FREE vaccines recommended during pregnancy to protect you and your pēpi against whooping cough, flu and covid.

You will pass some of your immunity to baby through the placenta. This means they have some protection from these diseases for the first few months of life until they can start building their own immunity. Your baby's vaccinations start at 6 weeks.

## Whooping cough (pertussis)

Whooping cough is highly contagious and can cause serious harm to your baby. It causes breathing difficulties and severe coughing fits. The cough can go on for weeks or months which is why it's sometimes called the '100-day cough'.

Some babies don't have a cough and can just turn blue and stop breathing. Babies without immunity are often admitted to hospital, of these, 1 in 50 die. Vaccination when pregnant gives your baby some immunity until they can build their own and protects 9 out of 10 young babies from developing severe whooping cough.

Immunisation provides the best protection for you and your pēpi. The whooping cough vaccine is free and is recommended from 16 weeks of every pregnancy. It can be given right up to the baby's birth, but ideally at least two weeks beforehand.

**You can have the whooping cough vaccine with every pregnancy to pass immunity to each baby.**

To build their own immunity, whooping cough vaccination is recommended for babies as part of their FREE immunisations at 6 weeks, 3 months, and 5 months. Being on time for these vaccinations is very important. Tamariki also get a booster at 4 years and again from 11 years old.

## Flu

The flu isn't just a common cold. It can be serious and make people very sick. If you get the flu when you are hapū (pregnant) you're more likely than other adults to have serious complications and need hospital treatment.

Pregnant people who get the flu have higher rates of early birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, and lower birth

weight. Newborns and young infants are more likely to end up in hospital with the flu than older children, so the protection they receive from you in the womb could make all the difference.

**You can get a free flu vaccination at any stage of your pregnancy.**

Getting the flu vaccine while you are pregnant will help protect you against flu. Although having the vaccination doesn't guarantee you won't catch the flu, it will give you and your baby more protection if you do catch it. You can't catch the flu from the vaccine – the vaccine used in New Zealand doesn't contain any live flu virus.

It's important to note that if you begin your pregnancy towards the end of the year (e.g. October), you may benefit from getting two free flu vaccines – one in the current year, and one in the next (e.g. April). This is important because the flu vaccine changes each year to protect you against the most common expected flu strains, so having the latest vaccine throughout your pregnancy will give you the best protection.

## Covid

If you get covid when you are hapū (pregnant) you're more likely than other adults to have serious complications and need hospital treatment. Being vaccinated against covid means you're far less likely to fall seriously ill. The covid vaccine can help protect you from stillbirth.

You can get a free covid vaccination at any stage of your pregnancy, but it's recommended that you wait at least 6 months since your last covid vaccine or positive test.

Talk to your doctor, nurse or healthcare provider to see if this is recommended for you.