



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30341-3724

October 9, 2014

Dear Colleague,

Pregnant women and their babies are at increased risk for influenza-related complications, including premature labor and preterm birth. Additionally, pertussis outbreaks continue to occur in the United States with infants at highest risk of severe illness, including hospitalization and death. Influenza vaccination is recommended in any trimester for all women who are pregnant or who plan to become pregnant during the influenza season, and a pertussis vaccination (Tdap) is recommended between 27 and 36 weeks of each pregnancy.¹ Immunization rates for these vaccines are low, leaving many pregnant women and their infants unprotected against these serious vaccine-preventable diseases.

We ask you to recommend the influenza vaccine to your pregnant patients throughout the current influenza season. We ask that you also recommend the Tdap vaccination to your pregnant patients as they enter their third trimester. **Studies confirm that your recommendation and offer of vaccines are essential.** One study showed that patients who were offered influenza vaccination during an office visit were 7 times more likely to be vaccinated for influenza than patients who reported their provider did not recommend or offer vaccination. Patients who received a recommendation alone were twice as likely to be vaccinated as those that received no recommendation.²

We encourage you to adopt the National Adult Immunization Practice Standards to help ensure that your patients receive influenza and Tdap vaccinations as well as all other indicated vaccinations. We ask you to complete the following steps at each patient encounter:

- **Assess** the immunization status of each patient.
- **Recommend** the indicated vaccines to each patient
- **Administer** any necessary vaccines or, if you do not stock the vaccine, **refer** the patient to a provider or location that can vaccinate the patient.
- **Document** the vaccinations that your patient is given, ideally in your state or local immunization registry.

Your pregnant patients might be concerned about receiving a vaccination while pregnant. Influenza and Tdap vaccines are safe and important for pregnant women and their infants. Infants in the first several months of life are at the greatest risk of severe illness from influenza and pertussis but are too young to be directly immunized, thus vaccination during pregnancy is critical.

You play a crucial role in helping keep pregnant women and their newborns healthy. Assuring your patients are protected by recommended vaccines is key. For more information about the influenza vaccine, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm>. For more information about the Tdap vaccine and pregnancy, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/pregnant/hcp/>. For information about all vaccines for pregnant women visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/preg-guide.htm>.

We thank you for your dedication to ensure the health and safety of pregnant women and their infants.

¹<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/index.html>

²http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6337a3.htm?s_cid=mm6337a3_w



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