

# Vaccinations during pregnancy

Which  
ones,  
when and  
why?



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## These 3 vaccinations are useful during pregnancy




You are looking forward to your baby, which will soon be born. During this time, there is nothing more important than your health and that of your child. Your gynecologist will therefore perform regular check-ups, and discuss with you, for example, ultrasound images, blood test results and – vaccinations.<sup>1</sup>

You may wonder what you should be vaccinated against during pregnancy and why.

Reliable answers are provided by the Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) at the Robert Koch Institute. It carefully examines which vaccination makes sense for whom. The STIKO recommendations for women during pregnancy include the following 3 vaccinations.<sup>2</sup>



1. Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss. Mutterschafts-Richtlinien. 2. Robert Koch-Institut (RKI). Epid Bull 2024;4:1-72.

Pathogen <sup>2</sup>	Vaccination recommendations for maternal immunization <sup>2</sup>
1. Whooping Cough (Pertussis)  	<b>Who?</b> All pregnant women <b>When?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• at the beginning of the 3rd trimester (from the 28th week of pregnancy)</li><li>• in the 2nd trimester if there is an increased probability of premature birth</li></ul> <b>How many?</b> One vaccination in every pregnancy – regardless of the interval to a previous whooping cough vaccination
2. Real Flu (Influenza)  	<b>Who?</b> All pregnant women <b>When?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• from the 2nd trimester</li><li>• from the 1st trimester in women with an increased health risk due to an underlying disease such as diabetes or high blood pressure</li></ul> <b>How many?</b> One vaccination
3. COVID-19 (Corona)  	<b>Who?</b> All pregnant women who have had less than 3 contacts with the coronavirus or who are unvaccinated (without full basic immunity) <b>When?</b> From the 2nd trimester of pregnancy <b>How many?</b> As many vaccinations until a total of at least 3 contacts with the corona virus have taken place (of which at least 1 vaccination)

## Why are these vaccinations useful during pregnancy?

There are 2 convincing reasons behind the STIKO recommendations for vaccinations during pregnancy: maternal passive immunity and self-protection.<sup>2</sup>

### Whooping cough: protect your baby from complications

By vaccinating yourself against whooping cough, you can protect your newborn baby from a serious disease as long as it cannot yet be vaccinated itself (maternal passive immunity).<sup>2</sup> To do this, it is important to understand the following information.<sup>2,3</sup>



#### Whooping cough presents high risks for your unvaccinated baby<sup>2,3</sup>

- Infants cannot receive their 1st vaccination against whooping cough until their 2nd month of life. Full protection is achieved after the 3rd dose of vaccination in the 11th month of life.<sup>2</sup>
- Unvaccinated infants contract whooping cough very frequently – especially in the first 3 months of life.<sup>3</sup>
- Young babies in particular often have to be treated at the hospital if they contract whooping cough. They also have an increased risk of severe disease progression such as respiratory failure and pneumonia.<sup>3</sup>

#### Your whooping cough vaccination can protect your baby<sup>2,3</sup>

- The whooping cough vaccination during pregnancy allows your antibodies to reach your child via the placenta.<sup>3</sup>
- This gives your baby passive immune protection against whooping cough for the first few months of life after birth.<sup>3</sup>
- This reduces the risk of your baby contracting whooping cough – including possible complications such as hospitalization or, in the worst case, death.<sup>3</sup>

**Furthermore:** The STIKO also recommends that close contacts such as grandparents or siblings should be vaccinated against whooping cough at least 4 weeks before the birth of your baby.<sup>2</sup>

3. Robert Koch-Institut (RKI). Epid Bull 2020;14:3–34.

## Flu and COVID-19: Protect yourself

Your immune system changes during pregnancy. This means you can catch the flu and coronavirus more quickly. You may also experience a severe course if you contract the flu or COVID-19.<sup>4-7</sup>

### Flu increases your risk of<sup>4,5</sup>

- Hospitalizations
- Intensive care treatments
- Pneumonia

### COVID-19 also increases your risk of<sup>6,7</sup>

- Mechanical ventilation
- Pregnancy poisoning (pre-eclampsia)
- Premature birth

**Caution:** if you also suffer from chronic illnesses such as diabetes or high blood pressure, these risks may even increase.<sup>4-7</sup>

**Furthermore:** Similar to whooping cough, your flu and COVID-19 vaccination can also protect your newborn baby from these diseases (maternal passive immunity).<sup>4-7</sup>

4. Robert Koch-Institut (RKI). Antworten auf häufig gestellte Fragen zur Schutzimpfung gegen Influenza.

5. Robert Koch-Institut (RKI). Epid Bull 2010;31:299- 309.

6. Robert Koch-Institut (RKI). Impfung bei Schwangeren, Stillenden und bei Kinderwunsch.

## How you can protect your baby after birth

After birth, various vaccinations and prophylaxis against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are recommended for your baby.<sup>2,8</sup> The STIKO has developed a vaccination calendar based on the dates of the preventive medical check-ups (U-Untersuchungen in German).<sup>2</sup>

The STIKO Calendar with standard vaccinations for the 1st year of life<sup>2</sup>



7. Briller JE, et al. Cardiovascular Complications of Pregnancy-Associated COVID-19 Infections. JACC Adv. 2022 Aug;1(3):100057.  
8. Koch J, et al. Beschluss und wissenschaftliche Begründung zur Empfehlung der STIKO zur spezifischen Prophylaxe von RSV-Erkrankungen mit Nirsevimab bei Neugeborenen und Säuglingen in ihrer 1. RSV-Saison. Epid Bull 2024;26:3-29.



## RSV protection for your baby during its first year

With the whooping cough vaccination during your pregnancy, you will give your baby antibodies and thus protection against whooping cough for the time after birth.<sup>3</sup> Following a similar principle, your baby can be protected in its first RSV season by the preventive administration of antibodies.<sup>8</sup>

High risks due to RSV	RSV protection with preventive antibodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As a common pathogen of respiratory tract infections, RSV occurs mainly in the colder months (RSV season).<sup>9</sup></li><li>• RSV can lead to serious illness and is one of the main causes of hospitalization in infants.<sup>9</sup></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After the birth, during its 1st RSV season, your baby is still too young to produce enough antibodies of its own against RSV.<sup>10</sup></li><li>• A single dose of preventive antibodies protects your baby like bodyguards for several months.<sup>11,12</sup></li></ul>

9. Robert Koch Institut, RKI-Ratgeber, Respiratorische Synzytial-Virus-Infektionen (RSV).

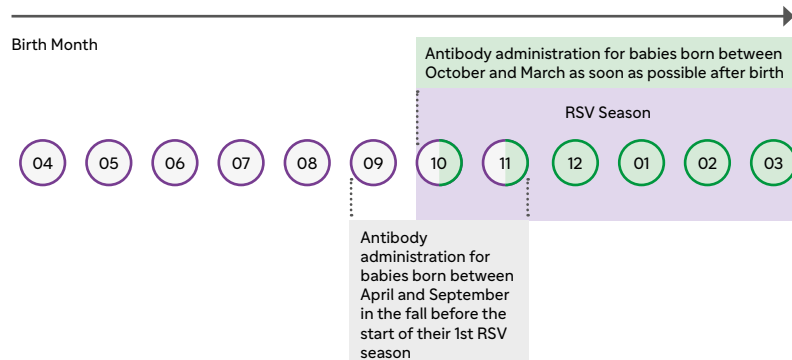


10. Esposito S, et al. Antibody response to respiratory syncytial virus infection in children <18 months old. Hum Vaccin Immunother. 2016 Jul 2;12(7):1700-6. 11. Simon AK, et al. Evolution of the immune system in humans from infancy to old age. Proc Biol Sci. 2015 Dec 22;282(1821):20143085. 12. Verwey C, Madhi SA. Review and Update of Active and Passive Immunization Against Respiratory Syncytial Virus. BioDrugs. 2023 May;37(3):295-309.

Protecting your baby from RSV is particularly important throughout the 1st year of its life. The STIKO therefore recommends that all newborns and infants be vaccinated before or during their 1st RSV season (October to March) and receive a single dose of preventive antibodies:<sup>8</sup>

- If your baby is born during the RSV season between October and March, antibodies should be administered as soon as possible after birth – preferably at the U2 examination (3rd-10th day of life) – to prevent infection in the family environment, for example.<sup>8</sup>
- If your baby is born outside the RSV season between April and September, it should receive the antibodies against RSV in the fall before its 1st RSV season if possible.<sup>8</sup>

It is best to seek advice from your pediatrician before the birth on how to protect yourself against RSV.



Timeline of the administration of protective antibodies against RSV in the 1st year of life, taking into account the birth month

## Find out more about the recommended prophylaxis options against flu, whooping cough and RSV here



You can find detailed information on the whooping cough and flu vaccination during pregnancy here:

<https://impfen.sanofi.de/impfempfehlungen-fuer-erwachsene/schwangerschaft>



Here you will find information on how to protect your baby from RSV infections:

<https://impfen.sanofi.de/gemeinsamgegenrsv>



Further information on vaccinations **before pregnancy and during breastfeeding** can also be found on the website of the Federal Center for Health Education (BZgA):

<https://www.impfen-info.de/schwangere>



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[mein.sanofi.de](https://mein.sanofi.de)

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Sanofi-Aventis Deutschland GmbH  
Lützowstr. 107 | 10785 Berlin



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