

How the Tdap Vaccine During Pregnancy Protects Your Baby from Whooping Cough

Pertussis, commonly known as **whooping cough**, is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by the bacteria ***Bordetella Pertussis***. It spreads through droplets in the air when someone coughs or sneezes.

For adults, pertussis can feel like a bad cold with a lingering cough. But for babies, especially those under 1 year old, it can be much more serious. If a baby who is not fully vaccinated gets whooping cough, about 1 in 3 will need to be hospitalized. **Complications** can include:

- Pneumonia
- Pauses in breathing (apnea)
- Seizures
- In rare cases, death

The good news? There is an effective way to help protect your baby before they are born.

What Is the Tdap Vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine protects against:

- **Tetanus**
- **Diphtheria**
- **Pertussis (whooping cough)**

Why Is the Tdap Vaccine Recommended During Pregnancy?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that pregnant women receive the Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy, ideally between **27 and 36 weeks**.

When you receive the Tdap vaccine during pregnancy, your body makes protective antibodies. These antibodies cross the placenta and help protect babies after birth.

This protection:

- Starts right away after birth.
- Lasts for the first two months of a child's life.
- Helps bridge the gap until the baby can get their own vaccine.

Newborns are at highest risk for severe pertussis, and they are too young to be fully vaccinated. Getting the Tdap vaccine during pregnancy is the best way to reduce the risk of whooping cough in the baby.

Has the Tdap vaccine been studied for use in pregnancy?

Studies looking at thousands of pregnant women who received the Tdap vaccine have not found increased risks for birth defects, preterm delivery, or other pregnancy complications.

Research on the Tdap vaccine and other recommended vaccines in pregnancy, like the flu vaccine, has been reassuring for both pregnant women and their babies.

MotherToBaby continues to study vaccines in pregnancy to provide up-to-date, evidence-based information to families and healthcare providers. Learn more about how you can help [here](#).

The Bottom Line

Getting the Tdap vaccine during pregnancy is the very best way to protect a newborn from whooping cough during their most vulnerable months. If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy and have questions about vaccines, talk

with your healthcare provider. You can also contact MotherToBaby for free and confidential information based on the latest research.

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Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at [MotherToBaby.org](https://www.MotherToBaby.org).

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