



DOH 348-572 July 2016

August 1, 2016

Dear Provider,

Two immunizations to protect the health of women and infants are recommended for pregnant women by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: **influenza and Tdap**.^{1 2}

Pregnant women are more prone to severe illness, hospitalization, and even death from flu. Pregnant women with flu also have a greater chance of miscarriage, and premature labor and delivery. Receiving a flu vaccine as early as possible during pregnancy reduces these risks. Flu shots have been given safely to millions of pregnant women over many years.

Pertussis outbreaks occur regularly in Washington, with infants at highest risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Tdap is recommended for women between 27 and 36 weeks in each pregnancy. This prevents mothers from transmitting pertussis to their infants, and their infants receive passive immunization that protects them during the vulnerable first weeks of life.

You can help to protect women and babies by routinely recommending and administering these immunizations. Studies confirm that your recommendation and offer of vaccines are essential!

Engage Your Office Staff:

- ✓ Develop a pro-immunization culture, including all office staff.
- ✓ Designate an immunization coordinator and establish a reminder system for vaccinations.
- ✓ Immunize staff members to prevent disease transmission.
- ✓ Issue standing orders for vaccinations. You can bill an administration code.

Educate Your Patients:

- ✓ Make a strong recommendation for needed vaccines and provide them on site.
- ✓ If you don't administer vaccines, provide a referral and *follow up with patients to ensure that they receive all recommended vaccines*.
- ✓ Discuss and document declinations and revisit the vaccine decision at subsequent appointments.

¹ Integrating immunizations into practice. Committee Opinion No. 661. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2016; 127; e104-7. Available at: www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Gynecologic-Practice/Integrating-Immunizations-Into-Practice

² ACOG Influenza Vaccination during Pregnancy. Committee Opinion No. 608. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2014; 116:1006-7. Available at: www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Obstetric-Practice/Influenza-Vaccination-During-Pregnancy

Use the [Washington State Immunization Information System](#) (IIS) or make sure your EMR sends immunization data to the IIS:

- ✓ Check each patient's immunization status to avoid missed opportunities.
- ✓ Document all administered vaccines.

Thank you for promoting these lifesaving immunizations to your patients. For more information, check our Department of Health webpages on [influenza](#) and [pertussis](#).

Sincerely,

Scott Lindquist
Communicable Disease Epidemiologist
Washington State Department of Health

For people with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711).