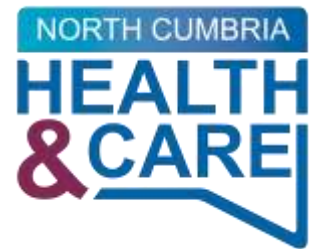


# Starting Well in North Cumbria

*"Making Every Conversation Count"*

## Vaccinations before, during and after pregnancy



<b>Before pregnancy</b>	<p><b>Are you trying for a baby and planning to visit a country that requires you to have travel vaccinations? If so, discuss this with your GP.</b></p> <p>While you're pregnant, it's best to avoid visiting countries or areas where vaccinations are required. However, we appreciate it may not always be possible to avoid visiting destinations that require vaccinations while you're pregnant. If this is the case, speak to your GP, who can outline the risks and benefits of any vaccinations you may require.</p>
<b>During pregnancy</b>	<p><b>It is recommended that women get the whooping cough and flu vaccinations during pregnancy.</b></p> <p>You can help to protect your baby by getting vaccinated against whooping cough (pertussis). Having the vaccination helps protect your baby from catching whooping cough in the first few weeks after they're born, as they will get some of the immunity from you. The best time to have the whooping cough vaccine is between 20 weeks (after your scan) and 32 weeks. But if for any reason you miss having the vaccine, you can still have it up until you go into labour.</p> <p>All pregnant women are offered seasonal flu vaccination, as they are at increased risk of severe illness if they get flu. The flu jab is given throughout the flu season, which runs from the beginning of October until around January or February. It is safe to have the flu jab at any stage during your pregnancy.</p> <p>Your midwife can give you more advice about vaccinations during pregnancy.</p>
<b>After pregnancy</b>	<p><b>A number of vaccinations are recommended for your child to protect them against serious illness.</b></p> <p>As a parent, you may not like seeing your baby or child being given an injection. But vaccination will help protect them against a range of serious and potentially fatal diseases.</p> <p>There are 3 good reasons to have your child vaccinated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• vaccinations are quick, safe and extremely effective</li><li>• once your child has been vaccinated against a disease, their body can fight it off better</li><li>• if a child is not vaccinated, they're at higher risk of catching and becoming very ill from the illness. If you have concerns speak to your health professional.</li></ul> <p>Your child's GP practice will let you know when your child is due their next routine set of vaccinations. You can also speak to your Health Visitor if you have any questions about childhood vaccinations.</p>

***"Our vision is for all families in North Cumbria to be valued, happy and healthy. We all want the very best for our families"***

## Further Information on: Vaccinations & Pregnancy

<b><i>What is a vaccine?</i></b>	<p>Vaccines work by imitating an infection or disease and stimulating the immune system to develop antibodies. Antibodies are the body's way of protecting us against disease or infections.</p> <p>The antibodies produced by vaccines fight disease without actually infecting us with the disease. If a vaccinated person comes into contact with the disease, their immune system will recognise it and immediately produce the antibodies they need to fight it.</p> <p>Newborn babies are protected against several diseases, such as measles, mumps and rubella, because antibodies have passed to them from their mothers. This is called passive immunity. Passive immunity usually only lasts for a few weeks or months.</p>
<b><i>Why do I need the flu &amp; whooping cough jabs whilst I'm pregnant?</i></b>	<p>There is good evidence that pregnant women have a higher chance of developing complications if they get flu, particularly in the later stages of pregnancy. One of the most common complications of flu is bronchitis, a chest infection that can become serious and develop into pneumonia.</p> <p>If you have flu while you're pregnant, it could mean your baby is born prematurely or has a low birthweight, and may even lead to stillbirth or death.</p> <p>Getting vaccinated while you're pregnant is highly effective in protecting your baby from developing whooping cough (pertussis) in the first few weeks of their life. The immunity you get from the vaccine will pass to your baby through the placenta and provide passive protection for them until they are old enough to be routinely vaccinated against whooping cough at two months old.</p>
<b><i>Will vaccines harm my baby whilst I'm pregnant?</i></b>	<p>It's understandable that you might have concerns about the safety of having a vaccine during pregnancy, but there's no evidence to suggest that the whooping cough vaccine and flu vaccine is unsafe for you or your unborn baby.</p> <p>Vaccinating pregnant women against whooping cough is known to be highly effective in protecting young babies until they can have their first vaccination when they are two months old.</p> <p>Studies have shown that it's safe to have the flu vaccine during any stage of pregnancy, from the first few weeks up to your expected due date. Women who have had the flu vaccine while pregnant also pass some protection on to their babies, which lasts for the first few months of their lives. It's safe for women who are breastfeeding to have the vaccine.</p>
<b><i>Can you overload a child's immune system?</i></b>	<p>As soon as a baby is born, they come into contact with large numbers of different bacteria and viruses every day. Their immune system is designed to cope with this. A child's immune system is not overloaded by the childhood vaccination programme.</p> <p>Studies have shown there are no harmful effects from giving several injections of vaccines in one go. The bacteria and viruses used in vaccines are weakened or killed, and there are far fewer of them than the bugs that babies and children come into contact with every day. Vaccination helps to improve protection against life-threatening diseases at the right time.</p>
<b><i>Are vaccines safe?</i></b>	<p>Vaccines have to be thoroughly tested for safety before they're made routinely available. Each vaccine's safety is continually monitored, even after it's been introduced. Information around vaccination myths and facts can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b><i>Links to further information and advice:</i></b>	<p><b>Before, during and after Pregnancy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NHS guide to vaccinations</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">NHS guide to vaccines during pregnancy</a></li> </ul>