

INFLUENZA SEASON 2010/11

RECOMMENDATION OF INFLUENZA VACCINE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN



Pregnancy and influenza

Most pregnant women who get influenza recover without complications and without harm to the foetus.

However, infection with influenza may increase the risk of serious illness in pregnant women. During the pandemic in 2009/10, a higher proportion of pregnant women were affected by severe complications from the disease than non-pregnant women. Pregnant women in the 2nd and 3rd trimester (after the 3rd month of pregnancy) were therefore recommended to take the pandemic vaccine (Pandemrix).

Continued recommendation to vaccinate pregnant women in the 2nd and 3rd trimester

It is difficult to predict which types of influenza virus will come to Norway this autumn and winter. In the current influenza season in the Southern Hemisphere, there are three types of influenza virus in circulation: 2009 A (H1N1) (swine influenza), A (H3N2) and a B virus. Experiences from the Southern Hemisphere show that infection with 2009 A (H1N1) represents the same risk of complications in pregnant women as during the pandemic.

For the influenza season 2010/11, all pregnant women who have completed their 3rd month of pregnancy are recommended to take the influenza vaccine to protect against 2009 A (H1N1). This also applies to those who were vaccinated with Pandemrix during the pandemic.

Seasonal influenza vaccine protects against three influenza types

For the upcoming influenza season, pregnant women are recommended to take the same vaccine offered to the other at-risk groups for influenza. This is a seasonal influenza vaccine that protects against the three types of virus (trivalent vaccine) which are predicted to cause influenza during the coming autumn and winter. Pregnant women who take the vaccine are protected against all three virus variants.

There is considerable experience with the use of trivalent seasonal influenza vaccines, also for pregnant women, children and the elderly. Several countries, including the U.S.A., have offered the seasonal vaccine to pregnant women for many years.

Serious side effects from the vaccine used for seasonal influenza are rare. As with other vaccines, it may give a slight feeling of malaise and fever and tenderness at the injection site. It does not cause influenza.

Pregnant women in the 1st trimester

Caution is always exercised with the use of medicines and vaccines in pregnant women, especially during the first three months of pregnancy. Therefore, this group is not included in the recommendation for the influenza vaccine. However, the vaccine can be considered if the pregnant woman has an additional risk of complications from influenza.

Further information

If you require further information, please consult your doctor.