



## VACCINATIONS DURING PREGNANCY

by the Department of Prevention

**VACCINES SAVE LIFE:** so as a future mother I get myself vaccinated.

During pregnancy, the future mother needs to be vaccinated ***against whooping cough and against flu*** (if the gestation occurs during a flu season, which is generally between October and January- February); both vaccines must be repeated for every pregnancy, are safe for mother and baby alike, and are offered free of charge by the Italian National Health System (SSN).

The ***vaccine against whooping cough*** is associated with that against diphtheria and tetanus in a single syringe. As protection from whooping cough lasts a few years only, the vaccine is recommended with every pregnancy even if one was vaccinated in the past or had contracted the disease. Whooping cough contracted by the newborn in his first months of life can be quite severe or even lethal, and the mother often represents the source of infection. The recommended period for vaccination is the third quarter of pregnancy, between the 28<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> week, so that the future mother is given time to produce a sufficient number of antibodies against whooping cough, which she will pass onto her baby through the placenta, to protect him during his first months of life until such time as he himself can get vaccinated.

Changes in the immune system, heart and lungs during pregnancy weaken the future mother vis-à-vis such diseases as flu that could manifest more severely and eventually require admission to hospital. In addition, flu can also harm the child's development. This is why pregnant women must necessarily ***get the flu vaccine*** for every pregnancy, since the vaccine against flu changes year by year. It is worth highlighting that some diseases, such as measles, mumps, rubella and chicken pox, if contracted during pregnancy, can prove harmful to the unborn baby (causing even serious malformations) and in some cases to the mother as well.

However, since vaccines against measles, mumps, rubella and chicken pox cannot be administered during pregnancy, it is important that after childbirth the new mother, unless she had contracted these diseases or undergone the full vaccination cycle, should take care to be vaccinated in anticipation of a subsequent pregnancy.

All these vaccines are offered free of charge by the National Health System. More information is available on the website of Azienda USL Toscana Centro (Central Tuscany Local Health Authority). You can in any event get information at the family clinics, outpatient vaccine clinics, the Public Relations Office of Azienda USL Toscana Centro, and from your GP as well. Vaccines are booked for through Central Appointments (CUP).