

Whooping Cough Vaccination in Pregnancy

What is Whooping Cough?

- Whooping cough is a serious bacterial infection
- Whooping cough can cause long bouts of coughing, making it hard to breathe.
- In Babies this can lead to severe complications such as pneumonia and brain damage.
- Most babies require hospital admission and when the disease is severe they may die.
- In severe cases babies with Whooping Cough may die.

What is an Immunisation?

- Immunisation protects us from getting infected with some harmful infections.
- These infections include Hepatitis B; Pertussis (whooping cough); Measles, Mumps and Rubella.
- Immunisation builds our body's ability to fight these diseases and is known as an immune response. Vaccines contain a part of the virus or bacteria that our body fights against. They also have additives such as preservatives or components to build a better immune response.

Why should pregnant women have the whooping cough Vaccine?

- Having whooping cough vaccine whilst you are pregnant will help protect your baby from developing whooping cough in their first six months.
- The immunity you develop after you are given vaccine will pass through the placenta to your baby.
- Your Baby cannot be vaccinated against whooping cough until they are 6 weeks old. Your baby is fully protected until 6 months old.

Is the Whooping Cough Vaccine Safe in Pregnancy?

- Yes. It is very safe. There is no evidence that the Whooping Cough vaccine causes any ill effects in mother or baby.
- If you are vaccinated against Whooping cough while you are pregnant, you still **need to have your baby vaccinated at 6 weeks**. You also need to make sure your baby has another **booster dose of the whooping cough vaccine at 18 months**. **This is** because the immunisation of mother's in pregnancy protects their baby but means that babies do not produce as high an immune response to their first immunisation schedule.

How do you get the whooping cough vaccine?

- The best time for pregnant women to get vaccinated is in your third trimester between 28 and 38 weeks. At that time the Midwife can give you the vaccination during your antenatal appointment at the West Gippsland Healthcare Group's Consulting Suites, Landsborough Street, Warragul.
- Other carers should also receive vaccination to make sure that your baby is not likely to be exposed to the Whooping Cough bacteria. This is especially important in the first weeks of life.

Cost: The whooping cough vaccine currently costs \$30.00 for patients with a Medicare card.

Ref: Australia Immunization Handbook Ed 10