



Rhode Island Issue Brief

The New ACIP Recommendation for Vaccinating Pregnant Women with Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis)

Background

Since the 1980s, pertussis (whooping cough) has been **on the rise**. In 2012, 48,777 cases of pertussis were reported in the U.S., but many more go undiagnosed and unreported.¹ Although pertussis can cause serious illness in people of all ages, compared to older children and adults, infants younger than 12 months of age have **substantially higher** rates of pertussis and the **largest burden** of pertussis-related deaths.²

The NEW Recommendation for Pregnant Women

- In 2012, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that **all pregnant women** receive Tdap with **each** pregnancy.³
- Optimal timing for Tdap administration is between **27 and 36 weeks gestation**, to maximize maternal antibody response and passive antibody transfer in the newborn. However, Tdap vaccination may be given at any time during pregnancy.³
- If Tdap was not administered during pregnancy it should be administered immediately postpartum.³

Protecting Infants from Pertussis

There are **two** strategies to protect infants from pertussis until they are old enough to get vaccinated:

- 1) Vaccinate pregnant women with Tdap during **each** pregnancy.
- 2) Vaccinate **close contacts** of the infant with Tdap (“cocooning”).

Health data show that household members are responsible for about 80% of infant pertussis infections, **and in almost half of these cases the mother is the source of the infection.**⁴ These data suggest that vaccinating pregnant women and close contacts will reduce pertussis infection in infants.

Recommended Actions for Prenatal Care Providers

- **Provide a strong recommendation** for Tdap vaccination.
- **Educate** staff and pregnant women about the importance of Tdap vaccination during pregnancy and evidence related to its safety.
- **Provide** Tdap vaccination to pregnant women **between 27 and 36 weeks gestation**.
- **Vaccinate** all healthcare personnel in your practice to prevent spreading pertussis to patients.
- **Advise** family members and other **close contacts** of pregnant and postpartum women to get the Tdap vaccination.

If the Tdap vaccine is not available at your practice, refer patients for vaccination:

HEALTH Information Line: 401-222-5960

References

1. CDC. Pertussis (Whooping Cough): Fast Facts. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/fast-facts.html>.
2. CDC. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: Updated Recommendations for Use of Tetanus Toxoid, Reduced Diphtheria Toxoid and Acellular Pertussis Vaccine (Tdap) in Pregnant Women and Persons Who Have or Anticipate Having Close Contact with an Infant Aged <12 Months --- ACIP, 2011. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6041a4.htm>.
3. CDC. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: Updated Recommendations for Use of Tetanus Toxoid, Reduced Diphtheria Toxoid and Acellular Pertussis Vaccine (Tdap) in Pregnant Women --- ACIP, 2012. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6207a4.htm>.
4. CDC. Pertussis Frequently Asked Questions. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/about/faqs.html>.