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## Tdap Vaccine in Pregnancy

### What is pertussis?

Pertussis, also called *whooping cough*, is a highly contagious infection that causes severe coughing and is seen commonly in newborns. About 1000 babies are hospitalized yearly due to pertussis infections and it can even lead to death in rare cases.

### How do I protect my baby against pertussis?

It is recommended for all pregnant women to get the Tdap vaccine in *each* pregnancy as it causes your body to make antibodies against the disease, which are then passed to your baby allowing your baby to be protected until 2 months of life when they can be vaccinated themselves.

It is also recommended that all family members and friends who will be in close contact with your baby get the Tdap vaccine if they have not been vaccinated in the last 10 years. The vaccine should be administered more than 2 weeks before being in contact with baby. If family members are protected then there is decreased chance that baby can contract the pertussis infection.

### What is the Tdap vaccine?

The Tdap vaccine is a combination of tetanus toxoid, reduced diphtheria toxoid and acellular pertussis. It protects against pertussis (described above), tetanus (a bacteria that can causes paralysis of the muscles needed for breathing and can cause death), and diphtheria (which can impact breathing and lead to death).

Pregnant women should get the vaccine between 27-36 weeks of pregnancy. It is recommended to receive this vaccine earlier in the 27-36 week window to maximize antibody formation. This vaccine is considered *safe* in pregnancy.

It is not recommended to receive the vaccine postpartum because while mom will be protected 2 weeks after receiving the vaccine, baby will not also have their own antibodies against pertussis.