



# County of Erie

CHRIS COLLINS  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

ANTHONY J. BILLITTIER IV, M.D., FACEP  
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

**HEALTH ADVISORY #249**

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## **HEALTH ADVISORY: VACCINATION OF WOMEN IN THEIR REPRODUCTIVE YEARS**

*Please distribute immediately to all Emergency Departments, Infection Control Departments, Employee Health Services, Infectious Disease Departments, Obstetrics, Pediatrics, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Pharmacy, Laboratory Director and **all** acute and primary patient care providers.*

The purpose of this advisory is to serve as a guide for vaccinating women in their reproductive years.

The information below focuses on the current recommendations of incorporating adult vaccination into reproductive health care in order to prevent diseases that can be easily passed on to newborns.

Immunizing women before, during and after pregnancy is an important preventive measure used to keep women and their families healthy. Part of pre-pregnancy counseling should include a review of the individual's vaccine history in order to determine which vaccines are currently needed. Live vaccines can be given at least one month before pregnancy or after pregnancy. Inactivated vaccines may be given before, during or after pregnancy, if needed.

The post-partum period, before discharge from the hospital, is an ideal time to administer vaccines. Vaccination ensures that both mother and baby will be protected from preventable diseases after leaving the birthing facility, a time when they are especially vulnerable. Breastfeeding is not a contraindication to vaccination (with the exception of smallpox vaccine); therefore women who plan to breastfeed can and should receive vaccinations. No evidence exists of any risk to a mother or her infant if the mother is vaccinated while breastfeeding.

The following vaccinations are **recommended** for women at risk for these diseases or for those who do not have a history of immunity:

**Influenza** – Women should receive an annual dose of influenza vaccine, either TIV or LAIV, if they have not already been immunized during their pregnancy. Influenza vaccine should be given **before leaving the hospital**.

**Tdap** – Women who have not previously received 1 dose of Tdap should receive Tdap **before leaving the hospital**. Tdap can be given as soon as 2 years following the last Td booster. Immunizing the mother with Tdap will help protect the newborn during their first few months of life when they are most vulnerable to pertussis.

**Varicella** – Women without evidence of immunity to varicella should be vaccinated with the 1st dose of varicella vaccine **before leaving the hospital**. The second dose should be given at the postpartum visit, 6-8 weeks after delivery. As it is a live virus vaccine, women should be counseled to avoid pregnancy for 4 weeks after receiving the varicella vaccine.

**Rubella (MMR)** – Women born on or after January 1, 1957, without evidence of immunity to rubella should be vaccinated with 1 dose of the MMR vaccine **before leaving the hospital**. Single antigen rubella vaccine should not be used.

Please discuss vaccine history and recommendations with your patients. Complete vaccine guidelines, during pregnancy and in the postpartum period, can be found on the following New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) websites: [www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/immunization/vaccinating\\_women\\_of\\_reproductive\\_age\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/immunization/vaccinating_women_of_reproductive_age_guidelines.htm) [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/preg-guide.htm#women](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/preg-guide.htm#women)

If you have any questions regarding this advisory or vaccinations in general, please contact the Erie County Department of Health Immunization Action Plan at (716) 961-6839.

**Health Category Definitions:**

**Health Alert FLASH:** conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

**Health Alert Priority:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary