

Tip 3: Reduce Your Risk of Infections.

If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, infections can harm you and your baby. You can [reduce your risk](#) of infections by taking steps before and during pregnancy.



Vaccines:

- Talk with your healthcare provider about getting up to date on all your vaccines before becoming pregnant. If you are pregnant, [CDC](#) recommends two vaccines **during** every pregnancy: the inactivated flu vaccine (the injection, not the live nasal spray flu vaccine) and the Tdap (whooping cough) vaccine. Vaccines help protect you and your baby.
- If you are pregnant, a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) is recommended, which can protect you and your baby from severe illness.
- Vaccines are available at doctor's offices, [health centers](#), and many pharmacies. Most health insurance plans cover recommended vaccines at little or no cost to you. If you don't have health insurance, you can still get vaccinated and you may be able to do it for free or at low cost. Contact your state health department or refer to our Tip Resources Map for your state.

Infections to be Aware Of:

- [CMV](#) (Cytomegalovirus) is the most common infectious cause of birth defects. You can lower your risk by reducing contact with the urine and saliva of young children:
 - Do not share food, utensils, drinks or straws
 - Do not put a child's pacifier in your mouth
 - Kiss children on the forehead instead of the lips
 - Wash hands well after changing diapers
- [GBS](#) (Group B Streptococcus) is a bacteria that 1 in 4 pregnant women carry in their body. If you are pregnant you should be tested for GBS between 36-37 weeks of pregnancy. If you are positive, there are antibiotics that can be given during delivery to drastically reduce the chances of GBS affecting your baby.
- [Zika](#) is a virus that can cause severe birth defects. If you are pregnant, you should not travel to areas with Zika outbreaks.
- [Toxoplasmosis](#) is a parasite that can harm your baby. To reduce your risk:
 - Avoid changing cat litter if possible. If no one else can perform the task, wear disposable gloves and wash your hands with soap and water afterwards.
 - Wear gloves when gardening and wash hands afterwards.
 - Wash fruits and vegetables well. Cook meat thoroughly.
- [Listeria](#) is a bacteria that can harm you and your baby. It is found in contaminated food. Follow food safety guidelines and talk to your doctor about [foods to avoid](#).
- [STIs](#) (sexually transmitted infections) can harm you and your baby. You can reduce the risk by:
 - Practicing [safe sex](#) during pregnancy
 - Reporting concerning symptoms
 - Getting tested and treated for STIs