

10th December 2020

FAO: CCG, GP and pharmacy colleagues, East of England.

Dear colleagues,

Re: Helping us to vaccinate pregnant women this year.

This year's flu vaccination programme is well underway, which is more important than ever with the added risk of flu and COVID-19 co-circulating.

As you will be aware, pregnant women are a priority group vulnerable to the serious impacts of flu and so it is important that we ensure high vaccine uptake in this group.

The flu vaccine protects pregnant women but also provides protection for their newborn in the first few months of life. At-risk babies cannot be vaccinated until six months of age.

GPs, pharmacists and maternity services across the East of England have been doing fantastic work to vaccinate at-risk groups in challenging times and uptake is progressing well for many groups.

However, pregnant women are one of the few groups in which uptake is lower than at this time last year- currently at 40.7% in the East of England as of week 48.

Pregnant women can be vaccinated at any stage of pregnancy. They are eligible for a free flu vaccination and can obtain one from their GP, pharmacy and for some from their maternity care provider.

Though many maternity units across the region are providing and promoting vaccination opportunistically, not all trusts are, and it remains the practice responsibility to call pregnant women they are aware of for vaccination.

With a sustained focus on this group, we can make a big difference to their uptake.

What we can do to vaccinate more pregnant women:

We have been working to support systems with their delivery plans and communications for this group. There are a number of things you could do to help improve the uptake:

1. **Check your practice data** for pregnant women on ImmForm and proactively contact unvaccinated pregnant women and consider hosting clinics for this group. If the practice does not have vaccine stock for these women, **refer them to their local pharmacy.**
2. There is a known issue with the denominator for pregnant women on ImmForm as it includes all women who were pregnant on 1st September of the flu season irrespective of pregnancy status later in the season. For this reason, it is important for practices to check all the women they have recorded as pregnant before 1st September to **correctly code** any woman that has delivered/miscarried.
3. Make sure all your **staff members know this group are eligible** and should be offered an appointment when they contact your practice or pharmacy.



4. **Promote the vaccination** for pregnant women on your website and opportunistically. There are a number of national resources you can use on your website, social media and newsletters/emails to patients available from the PHE [Campaign Resource Centre](#).

Thank you for your continued dedication to vaccinating and protecting patients in your area and for your assistance in achieving the aims of the 2020/21 flu immunisation programme.

Best wishes,



Oliver Jackson

Head of Flu Programme Delivery, NHS England and NHS Improvement – East of England