

September 2013

IMPORTANT NEWS
Changes to NIAC recommendations and supply of pertussis vaccine for pregnant women

Dear Doctor

I wish to update you about changes to the recommendations from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) for pertussis vaccination for pregnant women and also to inform you that supplies of Tdap **low dose** tetanus (T), diphtheria (d) and acellular pertussis (p) booster vaccine (Boostrix) are now available through the HSE National Cold Chain Service.

As per previous correspondence pertussis is a serious disease and vaccination is the best way to reduce the risk of infection in the mother and to reduce the morbidity and mortality in infants too young to be vaccinated.

Tdap (Boostrix) vaccine is recommended for

- Pregnant women between **27-36 weeks gestation in each pregnancy.**
The timing and frequency of the vaccination has been changed in line with new recommendations from the US. Recently published data shows maternal antibodies to pertussis wane and so will not provide protection in subsequent pregnancies and available data does not suggest any increased incidence of adverse events in pregnant women who received Tdap. Tdap can be given at any stage in pregnancy although it may be less effective in providing passive immunisation.
- Unvaccinated women in the week after delivery although this may be less effective.
- Close family contacts of infants born before 32 weeks gestation as they may not have received protection via maternal immunisation ideally two weeks before beginning close contact with the infant.

This includes

- siblings in the household who should have all age appropriate vaccinations including Tdap in 1st year of second level school
- unvaccinated older adolescents and adults

Please note that there is no administration fee agreed for this vaccination so all patients will be liable for your fee. This includes those with a medical or doctor only card.

I enclose information leaflets for pregnant women and further information including the new NIAC guidance and references is available at www.immunisation.ie/en/HealthcareProfessionals/Pertussis/ and for pregnant women at <http://www.immunisation.ie/en/AdultImmunisation/WhoopingCoughPertussis/>

Yours sincerely,



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