



Timing of pertussis vaccine in pregnancy

In February 2016 the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) reviewed new evidence indicating that high levels of maternal antibody are transferred to the infant, even if women are vaccinated earlier in pregnancy. Therefore, from 1 April 2016 it has been recommended that pregnant women are offered a single dose of dTaP/IPV vaccine between gestational weeks 16 and 32 **in every pregnancy**.

In practice, the customary time to offer pertussis immunisation will be after the foetal anomaly scan, which usually takes place between 18 and 20 weeks gestation. The reason for undertaking immunisation after the scan is to protect the vaccine from being associated with any anomalies identified at the mid-term anomaly scan. The GP contract for 16/17 has been negotiated to allow for the vaccine to be offered from 20 weeks gestation and the current PGD reflects this contractual position.

Information for Midwives

Midwives are advised to discuss pertussis immunisation as part of routine antenatal care and when sign posting pregnant women for vaccination at their GP surgery to remind them of the need to ensure that any appointment is made from 20 weeks gestation.

Information for General Practice

Practices should be aware that pregnant women are likely to discuss with their midwife the need for vaccination prior to 20 weeks and may be contact with the practice to request an appointment. For these women appointments should be arranged after 20 weeks gestation to ensure alignment with the GP contract and PGD.

Women may still be immunised after week 32 of pregnancy but this may not offer as high a level of passive protection to the baby. Vaccination late in pregnancy will, however, offer protection against disease to the mother and thereby reducing the risk of exposure in her infant.

To support this change Public Health England have published a new leaflet to inform women of the importance of immunisations against pertussis and influenza in pregnancy and the need for MMR post-natally if indicated, see www.gov.uk/government/publications/pregnancy-how-to-help-protect-you-and-your-baby

Please contact england.bnsssg.imms@nhs.net if you have any queries in relation to this information.