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## Flu Season and Pregnancy

Both seasonal influenza and H1N1 Novel Influenza cause more severe disease in pregnant women. Public health authorities therefore recommend **that all pregnant women be vaccinated against both seasonal influenza and H1N1 influenza.** Both vaccines are made from a killed-virus and can be given in any trimester.

Should a woman who is pregnant be exposed to H1N1 influenza through a close contact or family member, or develop symptoms of an influenza-like illness (Temperature above 100.4 degrees, sore throat, and often other symptoms such as cough, headache or muscle aches), **prophylaxis or treatment with the anti-viral medication Tamiflu (oseltamivir) is recommended.** There is little data on the use of this medication during pregnancy, so it has not been proved to be safe, but there are also no reports of danger or damage to the fetus when it has been used. Thus, public health authorities believe that the risks of severe infection pose more of a danger to the mother and baby than the use of Tamiflu.

Preventing infection is clearly important for pregnant women. Tips for preventing the flu include:

- 1) Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand-rubs, especially after you cough, sneeze, or dispose of used tissues.
- 2) Wash your hands after using public transportation or common objects, such as library computers.
- 3) Cleanse common objects, such as public computers, prior to use.
- 4) Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or the elbow of your arm when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- 5) Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, since germs may spread that way.
- 6) Avoid close contact with others who are ill, including hugging, holding or kissing anyone with a cold or the flu.
- 7) Avoid large gatherings during the flu season

For further information visit the Columbia University Preparedness Page, [www.columbia.edu/studentservices/preparedness/](http://www.columbia.edu/studentservices/preparedness/) or contact the Student Health Service at CUMC, 212-305-3400.