



# Dr. Natalie Shaw

MBBS FRANZCOG

Obstetrician & Gynaecologist

Provider No: 2462053J

ABN: 15 363 019 239

## Swine Flu and Pregnancy

The Department of Health has recently issued updated statements and advice regarding H1N1 Influenza in preparation for the 2010 winter ahead.

Dated 21 March 2010: "Australians must be prepared for possible outbreaks of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza – or swine flu – as we move into the Southern Hemisphere flu season. Since the beginning of this year there have been almost 50 confirmed cases of swine flu in Australia. To help people understand the risks swine flu poses to the community, and the need for all people to get vaccinated, the Australian Government is launching the '*Facts about Swine Flu*' campaign. These simple facts demonstrate that this is no ordinary flu. It affects younger, healthier people. In 2009, there were 37,636 cases, including 191 associated deaths. The median age of those dying was 53 years, compared to 83 years for seasonal influenza. Having people vaccinated now, before the flu season starts, will allow us to have an orderly vaccination program and avoid undue pressure on vaccination providers that could happen if people delay their vaccination until winter or until they see a rise in cases."

### Prevention

Pregnant women are among those deemed at increased risk of infection and are therefore offered the combined vaccine, which incorporates the H1N1, and seasonal flu vaccine for this year ('Fluvax' – incorporating H1N1, H3N2, influenza B strains). Not only does the vaccine help protect the woman, but the antibodies against the viruses are transported across the placenta and provide the baby with passive immunity for the first few months of life. This is important, as babies less than 6 months of age cannot have that particular vaccine. Please consider seeing your GP for this immunization.

In order to also minimize exposure of your baby to infections, including swine flu, ask your babysitters, grandparents etc to see their doctor for vaccinations such as Fluvax and whooping cough.

Viruses are spread by airborne droplets. To minimize exposure keep away from people who are coughing and sneezing. Wash your hands regularly as viral particles can be on door handles and other surfaces. If you are working and your colleagues are unwell at work, urge them to stay at home.



# Dr. Natalie Shaw

MBBS FRANZCOG

Obstetrician & Gynaecologist

Provider No: 2462053J

ABN: 15 363 019 239

## Treatment

If you have flu like symptoms such as headache, fatigue, sore throat, sneezing, runny nose, muscle aches, aching joints, cough **and also a fever** it is important to see your doctor. They will be able to assess you and decide whether to advise treatment with 'Tamiflu'. Tamiflu is thought to be safe in pregnancy, although the data is limited, and has been shown to decrease the chance of a pregnant women becoming very unwell with Swine Flu.

If you are one of my patients you will have my phone number and it is important to contact me if you are unwell.