

**Mayo Clinic News Network**

**Title: Preventing Influenza During Pregnancy Could Reduce Autism Risk**

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**Intro:** Expectant moms may have yet another good reason to get their flu shot. Pregnant women who develop influenza have a higher rate of autism in their newborns. The Centers for Disease Control, or CDC, says autism has increased 10-fold over the past 40 years. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ADS) now affects one in 88 American children. So, who wouldn't roll up their sleeve to lower the risk? Here's Dennis Douda for the Mayo Clinic News Network.

**Video**

**Audio**

<b>Total running time [1:42]</b>	
// NATS Flu Clinic	// NATS Flu Clinic
<b>Audio track 1</b>	Women who are pregnant, or may become pregnant, may have extra incentives for getting their flu shots. According to several recent studies, influenza infections in pregnant women may create potentially life-changing risks for their unborn children, such as bipolar disorder and autism.
<b>CG: Dr. Greg Poland Mayo Clinic Vaccine Researcher</b>	<b>03:33 “In the pregnant women who got influenza the risk of autism was about 2 to 3 fold higher.”</b>
<b>Audio track 2</b>  <b>Mayo Clinic lab b-roll</b>	Dr. Greg Poland serves on the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices ... and heads the Vaccine Research Group at Mayo Clinic. His team has been studying the flu virus and its impact on the population for 25-years. He believes that rather than the flu vaccine itself preventing some occurrences of autism and mental illness, it's more likely that <i>keeping mothers healthy during pregnancy</i> lowers the risk to their offspring.
Dr. Greg Poland speaking	<b>“In one study they looked at about 100,000 pregnant women and they looked at those women who developed influenza and fever and those women who didn't and then looked at their children, about 96,000 children.”</b>
<b>Audio track 3</b>	Bonnie Sexton says she wanted her flu shot because she knew pregnant women are at higher risk of severe flu complications, even death. But, news of this extra benefit brings even more peace of mind.
<b>CG: Bonnie Sexton Expectant Mother</b>	<b>“It's nice to know that you can help a little bit, that it isn't all in somebody else's hands, that there's something you can do to reduce the risk of autism.”</b>
<b>Audio track 4</b>	Dr. Poland says women vaccinated for <i>Rubella</i> also lower their children's autism risk, although that vaccine has to be administered before

	becoming pregnant.
Dr. Greg Poland speaking	<b>“I like to say it this way - you can think of flu vaccine and rubella vaccines as anti-autism vaccines .”</b>
<b>Audio track 5</b>	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Dennis Douda.

**Anchor tag:** It's important that pregnant women request the flu **shot**, not the nasal spray. The **shot** is made from an inactivated virus, so it's safe for both mother and baby during any stage of pregnancy. By the way, with just a few exceptions, flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older.

REFERENCES:

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[2.] NIH/National Inst. Of Mental Health <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2013/flu-in-pregnancy-may-quadruple-childs-risk-for-bipolar-disorder.shtml>

[3.] Pediatrics, 2001 May;107(5):E84. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11331734>

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