Vaccination of pregnant women is the most effective way to protect newborns from whooping cough

We encourage pregnant women to get the whooping cough vaccine, which is also available at the Maternity Hospital's Vaccination Room!

To make an appointment for the vaccination, call 26530805. Opening hours of the Vaccination Room: weekdays from 11 a.m. till noon, and from 2:30 p.m. till 3:30 p.m.

WHAT IS WHOOPING COUGH?
Whooping cough is a highly contagious infection caused by the bacterium *Bordatella pertussis*. It is airborne (spread when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks).
The most severe forms of whooping cough particularly affect newborns and babies. The infection affects the lungs and airways, it can cause a painful and uncontrollable cough, making breathing difficult, and create many other serious complications.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF THE WHOOPING COUGH?

- severe, uncontrollable coughing attacks;
- coughing fits may be followed by vomiting, retching or a *wheezing* breath;
- newborns may not have the typical coughing fits, but may have interruptions in breathing (the baby turns blue).

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS?
The cough can cause serious complications, including brain damage and pneumonia, as well as the death of the baby.

HOW CAN NEWBORNS AND BABIES BE PROTECTED FROM WHOOPING COUGH?
According to the national vaccination schedule, an initial course of 2-3 doses is usually given to infants between 2 and 12 months of age. This means that **newborns and infants in the first months of life are the most vulnerable to the infection.**

The most effective way to protect newborns and young babies from the whooping cough is to get the vaccine during pregnancy!

Important! To build up antibodies that can transfer protective antibodies transplacentally to the fetus, a woman needs to be revaccinated against whooping cough during every pregnancy.

Over time, the antibodies decrease, and although they can protect the woman from the disease, they no longer have a protective effect to the baby. The World Health Organisation recommends that pregnant women should be revaccinated against whooping cough between the 20th and 32nd week of pregnancy.

WHY SHOULD PREGNANT WOMEN GET THE WHOOPING COUGH VACCINE?

- The vaccine creates antibodies in the mother's body that are transferred to the fetus through the placenta, protecting the baby from getting whooping cough in the first few months of life.
- The whooping cough vaccine protects the mother.
- Vaccination during pregnancy is highly effective (reducing the chance of whooping cough to the newborn and to the infant up to 3 months of age by 90-95%).

Whooping cough vaccination during pregnancy is safe (studies show no increased risk of complications in women or newborns). Side effects of the whooping cough vaccine are usually mild. The most common side effects may be pain, redness and swelling at the site of vaccine administration, muscle pain or a slight fever.