

September 2013

**Re. Pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine for pregnant women**

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to inform you of the supply of pertussis vaccine for pregnant women attending general practitioners and maternity hospitals.

Pertussis is a serious disease and vaccination is the best way to reduce the risk of infection in the mother and to reduce the morbidity and mortality in infants too young to be vaccinated. There have been over 130 cases so far this year and over 450 cases in 2012 when there were two infant deaths.

The best way to protect the very young infant is to vaccinate pregnant women with a low dose pertussis vaccine Tdap (Boostrix) between 27-36 weeks gestation in each pregnancy in line with new recommendations from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC).

Supplies of Tdap booster vaccine (Boostrix) have now been procured by the National Immunisation Office for maternity units and general practice and are available to order from the HSE National Cold Chain Service. There is no GP administration fee agreed for this vaccination so all patients attending GPs will be liable for an administration fee (including those with a medical or doctor only card).

The enclosed information leaflets are now being distributed to GPs and maternity hospitals and further information is available at [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

Yours sincerely



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