

Pregnancy, Children Under 3 yrs. old, Thimerosal and Washington State Law

Per Washington state law (RCW 70.95M.115), ***pregnant women and children under 3 years of age*** cannot receive any vaccine containing more than a trace amount of thimerosal. This law can be suspended by the Washington State Secretary of Health in times of outbreak or vaccine shortage.

For more information on Washington State and Thimerosal or to determine if the law has been suspended: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/ThimerosalLaws>

Key facts about thimerosal

- Thimerosal is an organic compound containing ethylmercury that has been used as a preservative in some vaccines since the 1930s.
- Thimerosal is used to prevent bacterial and fungal growth, which may cause severe reactions, serious illness, or death.
- Thimerosal is only necessary as a preservative for some vaccines that come in multi-dose vials, which contain more than one dose of vaccine. Preservatives are not needed for vaccines in single-dose forms.
- Thimerosal is safe in the trace amounts found in vaccines and is easily eliminated naturally from the body.
- A robust body of peer-reviewed scientific studies conducted in the U.S. and other countries support the safety of thimerosal-containing vaccines.

Resources on safety of thimerosal

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/thimerosal/index.html>

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

<https://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/The-Flu-Vaccine-and-Pregnancy?IsMobileSet=false>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

<https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/safety-availability-biologics/thimerosal-and-vaccines#nolink>

World Health Organization (WHO)

https://www.who.int/vaccine_safety/committee/topics/thiomersal/questions/en/

Vaccine Education Center

<https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-ingredients/thimerosal>