

COVID-19 Vaccination in Pregnancy and Lactation

Q: What are my risks if I am pregnant and contract COVID-19?

A: You are at increased risk of severe illness (ICU admission, mechanical ventilation and death) especially if you have comorbidities, such as obesity or diabetes. Also, there may be an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes (such as preterm birth).

Q: Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant?

A: Yes, if you are part of a group (ex. healthcare personnel) who is recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and are pregnant, you may choose to be vaccinated.

A discussion with your healthcare provider can help you make an informed decision.

Q: Are there studies on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant women and their fetus?

A: No, but studies in humans are ongoing and more are planned. It is expected that the safety and efficacy profile of the vaccine for pregnant individuals would be similar to that observed in non-pregnant individuals.

Q: Since this is an mRNA vaccine, will it change my DNA or the DNA of my fetus?

A: No, this is not a live vaccine, and it is degraded quickly by normal cellular processes so it does not enter the nucleus of the cell or your DNA. It therefore will not cause any genetic changes to you or your fetus.

Q: What are some important considerations for vaccination if I am pregnant?

- A:
- The level of COVID-19 community transmission (risk of acquisition)
 - Your personal risk of contracting COVID-19 (by occupation or other activities)
 - The risks of COVID-19 to you and potential risks to your fetus
 - The efficacy of the vaccine
 - The known side effects of the vaccine
 - The lack of data about the vaccine during pregnancy

Q: What are symptoms following COVID-19 vaccination, and are they normal?

A: Systemic symptoms can be a normal part of the body's reaction to the vaccine and developing antibodies to protect you against COVID-19 illness. These can include fever, fatigue, headache, injection site reactions, chills, muscle and joint pains. Most are:

- mild to moderate in severity
- occur within the first 3 days of vaccination
- resolve within 1-2 days of onset

Q: What if I experience some of these side effects?

A: If you experience fever following vaccination, you can consider taking acetaminophen as fever has been associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes. Please discuss with your healthcare provider.

Q: Do I need to be tested for pregnancy before receiving the vaccine?

A: Routine testing for pregnancy prior to receipt of a COVID-19 vaccine is not recommended.

Breastfeeding and COVID-19 Vaccine

Q: Are there studies on COVID-19 vaccine and breastfeeding?

A: There is no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in lactating women or the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant or milk production/excretion.

mRNA vaccines are not live virus vaccines and are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. Theoretical concerns regarding the safety of vaccinating lactating individuals do not outweigh the potential benefits.

Q: Can I start or continue to breastfeed if I receive the vaccine?

A: If a lactating woman is part of a group (e.g., healthcare personnel) who is recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, she may choose to be vaccinated.

A discussion with your healthcare provider can help you make an informed decision.

**COVID-19 vaccine development and regulatory approval is a rapidly changing process. Information and recommendations will evolve as more data are collected. For the most up-to-date CDC recommendations on COVID-19 vaccine and pregnancy, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>

Information obtained from CDC website above and ACOG.org "Vaccinating pregnant and lactating patients against COVID-19"