



## I'm pregnant. Should I get a COVID vaccine?

For most people, getting the COVID vaccine as soon as possible is the safest choice.

Although pregnant people were not included in the studies, data is emerging on people who are pregnant and got a vaccine.

The information below will help you make an informed choice about whether to get a COVID vaccine while you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.

### Your options:

Get a COVID vaccine as soon as it is available



~or~

Wait for more information about the vaccines in pregnancy



### Understanding COVID in pregnancy:

COVID is dangerous. It is *more dangerous* in pregnancy.

- Pregnant COVID patients are **5 times** more likely to end up in the intensive care unit than non-pregnant COVID patients.<sup>1</sup>
- Preterm birth may be more common.<sup>2</sup>
- Pregnant people are more likely to die of COVID than other people with COVID who are the same age.<sup>3,4</sup>



### What are the benefits of getting the COVID Vaccine?

The COVID vaccines prevent moderate and severe COVID.

Getting a vaccine will prevent you from getting very sick with COVID.

The COVID vaccines may reduce spread.

The vaccine may help keep you from giving COVID to people around you. As COVID infections go up in our communities, your risk of getting - and giving - COVID goes up too.

These vaccines have no live virus<sup>5</sup> and do NOT contain ingredients that are known to be harmful to pregnant people or to the fetus.

Many vaccines are routinely given in pregnancy and are safe (for example: tetanus, diphtheria, and flu).

### What are the risks and unknowns of getting the COVID Vaccine?

- Each vaccine was tested in over 20,000 people, and there were no serious side effects.
- We do not know if the vaccines work as well in pregnancy as they do in non-pregnant people.



- We know that in studies done by Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, there were no adverse effects on female reproduction or fetal development.<sup>6,7</sup>
- So far, the mRNA vaccines have been given to over 30,000 pregnant people in the US who registered with the CDC.<sup>8</sup>
- Of those pregnancies, 275 have been reported as complete. The number of miscarriages in people who got the vaccine (15%) was about the same as we see in pregnant people who have NOT gotten a COVID vaccine (10-25 %).<sup>8</sup>
- Birth defects were seen in the same number of people as in the general population who have NOT gotten a COVID vaccine (3-4%).<sup>8</sup>

People getting the vaccine will probably have some side effects.

This is a normal response by the immune system. These effects are more common after the second dose and in the mRNA vaccines but were not more common in pregnancy. The most common side effects are:<sup>6,7,8</sup>

- arm pain (~84%)
- muscle pain (~38%)
- fatigue (~62%)
- chills (~32%)
- fever (~14%)
- joint pain (~24%)



Of every 100-500 people who get a vaccine, 1 will get a high fever (over 102°F).

- A persistent high fever during the first trimester might increase the risk of fetal abnormalities or miscarriage.
- The CDC recommends using acetaminophen during pregnancy if you have a high fever. Another option is to delay your COVID vaccine until after the first trimester.

## What do the experts recommend?

The CDC recommends the COVID vaccines for adults.<sup>9</sup> However, because there are no studies of pregnant people yet, there are no clear recommendations for pregnant people. This is standard for a new drug and early research of the vaccines in pregnancy is reassuring.

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine strongly recommends that pregnant individuals have access to COVID vaccines, and that each person talk to their doctor or midwife about their own personal choice.<sup>10</sup>

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends that the COVID vaccine should not be withheld from pregnant individuals.<sup>11</sup>

The World Health Organization states the mRNA vaccine can be given to people who are breastfeeding without stopping breastfeeding after vaccination. They recommend that pregnant people at high risk of exposure to COVID or with medical problems may be vaccinated in consultation with their health care provider.<sup>12</sup>

## What else should I think about to help me decide?

Make sure you understand as much as you can about COVID and about the vaccine.

**1** Ask a trusted source, like your midwife or doctor.

If you want more information on specific vaccines and references, scan the QR code



## Think about your own personal risk.

**2**

Look at the columns below and think about *your* risk of getting COVID (left) and think about your safety - are you able to stay safe (right)?

### The risks of getting sick from COVID are higher if...

- You have contact with people outside your home
- You are 35 years old or older
- You are overweight
- You have other medical problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease
- You are a smoker
- You are a racial or ethnic minority, or your community has a high rate of COVID infections
- You are a healthcare worker<sup>13</sup>

.. it probably makes sense to get the vaccine.

### If you are not at higher risk for COVID and...

- You always wear a mask
- You and the people you live with can socially distance from others for the whole pregnancy
- Your community does NOT have high or increasing COVID cases
- You think the vaccine itself will make you very nervous (you are more worried about the unknown risks than about getting COVID)
- You have had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine

... it might make sense for you to wait for more information.

## Summary

1. COVID seems to cause more harm in pregnant people than in people of the same age who are not pregnant.
2. The risks of getting an mRNA COVID vaccine during pregnancy are thought to be small but are not totally known.
3. You should consider your own personal risk of getting COVID. If your personal risk is high, or there are many cases of COVID in your community, it probably makes sense for you to get a vaccine while pregnant.
4. Whether to get a COVID vaccine during pregnancy is your choice

**Do you have more questions? Call your doctor or midwife to talk about your decision**

Was this decision aid helpful? Please take a moment to give us feedback about this decision aid at <https://is.gd/COVIDVac>

## Tell the CDC about your experience with the vaccine

If you get the vaccine, you will get a "V-safe information sheet." Consider registering so we can better counsel people in the future.

Intended Use: This decision aid is intended for use by pregnant people who are considering getting a COVID-19 vaccine. It was created by the Shared Decision-Making: COVID Vaccination in Pregnancy working group at the University of Massachusetts Medical School – Baystate. This group consists of experts in the fields of OB/GYN, Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Shared Decision-Making and risk communication, Emergency Medicine, and COVID-19 research.

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Translations, references, more info available at: <http://foamcast.org/COVIDvacPregnancy>



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Health**



University of  
Massachusetts  
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