



Pregnancy and COVID-19

Are you pregnant, or are you considering becoming pregnant and concerned about getting vaccinated against COVID-19? There is lots of new information and research that can help you feel comfortable making the decision to get vaccinated.

More than a year after vaccinations were made available against COVID-19, scientists now know how important it is for people wanting to get pregnant to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccinations protect them and their babies from serious illness and potential birth complications.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explicitly recommends the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines and boosters for people who are pregnant, breast or chestfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or who might become pregnant in the future.¹



Getting vaccinated before you become pregnant

Many people are concerned that getting vaccinated against COVID-19 could affect their ability to have children. But the evidence is clear; vaccines do not impact your ability to get pregnant - but getting COVID-19 can.

A recent study of more than 2,000 couples in America and Canada has shown that coronavirus vaccines have no effect on fertility in men or women, but getting sick with COVID-19 can at least temporarily make men less fertile. The study also showed that, in the three months after a male partner (or partner assigned male at birth) is infected with COVID-19, his ability to conceive can be reduced by almost 20%!² Getting vaccinated can help you get pregnant.²

Getting vaccinated if you are already pregnant

COVID-19 during pregnancy can make you very sick. The best protection is to be vaccinated. A recent review of over 250,000 pregnancies found that getting vaccinated while you are pregnant is safe for you and your baby and can protect you from severe illness.³

When you are protected, your growing baby is also protected. Antibodies developed from the mRNA vaccine pass through your umbilical cord to protect your baby in the womb.⁴ Protection from vaccination is also stronger than protection from having had COVID-19 and can last at least six months after birth, protecting babies while they develop their own immune systems. Babies of vaccinated mothers have a 61% reduced risk of being hospitalized with COVID-19.

If you are pregnant, staying up to date with your vaccinations and boosters will provide added protection to your baby.



Breast or chestfeeding

If you are breast or chestfeeding and not yet vaccinated, it is also important to get the mRNA vaccine. Getting vaccinated will protect you and your infant because the antibodies you develop against COVID-19 pass through your milk to your baby. And, studies have shown, this protection can increase the longer you breast or chestfeed, helping protect your baby until he or she can be vaccinated.⁶ After vaccination, you may notice some minor side-effects, such as a small reduction in your milk, but these side-effects are temporary, most going away in a few days.⁷



The dangers of not being vaccinated when pregnant

Unvaccinated people are more likely to experience severe to moderate COVID-19 than vaccinated people and if you are pregnant your chances of becoming very ill are even higher. Underlying conditions such as diabetes, obesity, or HIV, can put you at higher risk.

People's bodies and immune systems change during pregnancy making them much more susceptible to illnesses that affect the lungs and cause breathing difficulties.⁸ If you are pregnant or were recently pregnant and are unvaccinated, you are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 and can have other complications, as well, such as:

- Being up to six times more likely to be hospitalized if you become ill with COVID-19⁹
- Needing special equipment to help you breathe
- Having two times the risk of developing pre-eclampsia or eclampsia

Additionally, if you have severe to moderate COVID-19 during pregnancy, your baby is at increased risk of complications. These complications can include:

- Severe damage to the placenta which can limit oxygen to your developing baby¹⁰
- Increased risk of early birth, Cesarean delivery, heavy bleeding after birth, and losing your pregnancy
- Increased risk of hospitalization in newborns with COVID-19¹¹

Protect yourself, your baby, and your family

As Indigenous people, it is our role to learn from those who came before us and nurture those who come next. We dance, we pray, we share, we adapt, we protect.

We know that you want to provide the best and safest environment for your child. Making sure that you and all the eligible members of your family are vaccinated and boosted will help protect your newborn.

Be safe. Make your appointment to be vaccinated today!

¹https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html#anchor_1628692520287

²<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/study-suggests-covid-19-vaccines-do-not-reduce-fertility>

³<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2790610>

⁴<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33983379/>

⁵<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7107e3.htm>

⁶<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/148/5/e2021052286/181337/SARS-CoV-2-Antibodies-in-Breast-Milk-After>

⁷<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK565969/>

⁸<https://www.science.org/content/article/why-pregnant-women-face-special-risks-covid-19>

⁹<https://www.science.org/content/article/why-pregnant-women-face-special-risks-covid-19>

¹⁰<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35142798/>

¹¹<https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=864186>