

FAQs for Pregnant Women

If you are pregnant, or planning to become pregnant, and are thinking about getting vaccinated, what should you know?

Q: What are the known risks of getting a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy?

- Pregnant women were not included in the clinical trials of the vaccine. A few people who received the vaccines in the clinical trials did get pregnant. There have been no reports of any problems with these pregnancies, and they are continuing to be monitored.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), along with other federal partners, is monitoring people who have been vaccinated for serious side effects. So far, more than 160,000 pregnant people who have been vaccinated have reported to the CDC about how the vaccine has affected them.¹
- No safety problems have been reported with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines,² and no unexpected pregnancy or fetal problems have occurred. According to the CDC, women younger than 50 years old should especially be aware of the rare risk of blood clots with low platelets after vaccination with the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine² and they should know about other available COVID-19 vaccine options for which this risk has not been seen.
- You can participate in the effort to track vaccine side effects by enrolling in the **v-safe** After Vaccination Health Checker. (More information on this program is given below.)
- Side effects can occur after receiving any of the available COVID-19 vaccines, especially after the second dose for vaccines that require two doses. Pregnant people have not reported different side effects from non-pregnant people after vaccination with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines).²
- Side effects may occur in the first few days after getting vaccinated.³ These include pain or redness at the injection site, and mild to moderate fever, headache, muscle aches, chills, tiredness, and nausea. Side effects may be worse after the second dose of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.³
- Fever should be avoided during pregnancy, especially in the first trimester. Those who develop fever after vaccination can take acetaminophen (Tylenol).² Consult with your physician regarding medications that are safe to use during your pregnancy and after vaccination.

Q: What are the benefits of getting the COVID-19 vaccine?

- The vaccines can help protect you from getting COVID-19. With the two-dose vaccines, you must get both doses for maximum effectiveness.³ It's not yet known whether vaccination prevents passing the virus to others if you do get COVID-19 or how long protection lasts. At this time, vaccinated people still need to wear masks and practice social distancing.
- Another potential benefit is that getting the vaccine while pregnant may help you pass antibodies against COVID-19 to your baby. In a recent study⁴ of vaccinated moms, antibodies were found in the umbilical cord blood of babies and in the mother's breastmilk.
- The COVID-19 vaccines are being offered to people who are breastfeeding/lactating. Clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccines currently used in the United States did not include people who are breastfeeding.²

Q: What are the known risks of getting COVID-19 during pregnancy?

- About 1 to 3 per 1,000 pregnant women with COVID-19 will develop severe disease, according to the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine.⁵ Compared with those who aren't pregnant, pregnant people infected by the COVID-19 virus:
 - Are three times more likely to need ICU care.
 - Are two to three times more likely to need advanced life support or a breathing tube.
 - Have a small increased risk of dying due to COVID-19.
 - May be at increased risk of stillbirth and preterm birth.⁵⁻⁸

Q: What is my risk for severe complications if I get COVID-19?

- Data⁹ show that older pregnant women; those with preexisting health conditions, such as obesity with a body mass index higher than 35, diabetes, or heart disorders; and Black or Latina women have an especially increased risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

Q: What happens when you enroll in v-safe?

- The **v-safe** after vaccination health checker program lets the CDC check in with you after your vaccination.¹ Enroll in v-safe by using your smart-phone browser to go to **vsafe.cdc.org**. At sign-up, you can indicate that you are pregnant. Once you do, expect the following:
 - Someone will call you from the CDC (which may be an Atlanta, Georgia, phone number) to ask initial questions and get more information.
 - You may be asked to enroll in the vaccine pregnancy registry, which is collecting information about any effects of the vaccine during pregnancy. This is a great way to help.

Q: Choosing vaccination ... or not?

- No matter what you decide, it is important that you continue to follow COVID-19 infection prevention steps, such as wearing a mask, washing your hands frequently, and maintaining physical distancing of at least 6 feet.

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References:

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