



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): Vaccine Decision Making for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women

Should I get the COVID-19 Vaccine?

It is important to make an informed decision by learning what you can about the vaccine and your personal risk. The vaccine has not been tested in pregnant or breastfeeding women at this time. It is not known if the vaccine will work as well in those who are pregnant as those who are not or if there will be an increased risk of infant loss (miscarriage) or birth defects.

Experts such as the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine strongly recommends that pregnant women have access to COVID-19 vaccines. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have advised that the vaccine not be withheld from pregnant individuals who meet the criteria for vaccination.

- You may decide to get the vaccine as soon as you are able.
- Or:
- You may decide to wait until more is learned about getting the COVID-19 vaccine.



Here are facts to help you decide:

The COVID-19 infection presents a **higher risk** to pregnant women:

- A higher chance of needing to be in an Intensive Care Unit
- More likely to need a breathing machine called a ventilator
- Higher risk for early (pre-term) birth
- Higher death rates have occurred

The COVID-19 vaccine will help prevent a large number (9.5 out of 10) COVID-19 infections.

The COVID-19 vaccine will not give you the infection.

The same side effects from the vaccine can occur such as injection site reactions, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain and fever.

- Tylenol can be used during pregnancy for a high fever according to the CDC.

What about breastfeeding?

Experts such as the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine report there is no reason to believe that the vaccine affects the safety of breastmilk. Antibodies formed do pass from the breastmilk to the infant and may protect the infant also.



What is known about the new vaccines?

Two of the new vaccines are messenger RNA vaccines (mRNA). A brief message like a Snap Chat goes to the cell with a protein causing an immune response. The mRNA goes away quickly. It does not alter DNA or cause infertility.

What do I choose?

Consider your personal risks in the table below. This may help you make your decision. Check with your healthcare provider if you have more questions.

| You may choose to get the COVID-19 vaccine if you: | You may choose NOT to get the COVID-19 vaccine if you: |
|--|--|
| Are a healthcare worker | The number of COVID-19 cases where you live is low |
| Have contact with people who do not live with you who do not wear masks | Have a history of severe allergic reactions to vaccines |
| Interact with a lot of people | Have a lot of fear or anxiety about the unknowns of the vaccine at this time |
| Are overweight | |
| Have other medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease | |
| Are a smoker | |
| Have a high rate of COVID-19 cases in your community | |
| Are part of a racial or ethnic minority group | |

Whatever you decide, **you will be supported**. Whether you receive the COVID-19 vaccine or not, you will still need to wear a face covering, maintain social distancing, and do proper handwashing as you continue to make healthy choices for you and for your infant.