

Key Messages: COVID-19 vaccines for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning a pregnancy

Pregnant women

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant is safe, effective and highly recommended.
- COVID-19 infection in pregnancy increases the risk of medical complications and death.
- Pregnant women who contract COVID-19 are*:
 - Five times more likely to be hospitalized and spend 3.73 days longer in hospital
 - 10 times more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU)
 - More likely to suffer from severe illness
 - More likely to require ventilation/life support breathing
- After the COVID-19 infection has resolved, many pregnant women will continue to experience ongoing medical complications.
- COVID-19 infection in pregnancy significantly increases the risk of stillbirth, premature birth, high blood pressure, caesarean delivery and low birth weight.
- There is also an increased risk that the baby will need to be admitted to neonatal intensive care.
- There is no evidence to suggest that taking the COVID-19 vaccine will impact your pregnancy.
 - Several studies with more than 17,000 pregnant women have shown that vaccination immediately prior to and/or during pregnancy has no impact on pregnancy outcomes (i.e. no change in the rate of miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth, growth restriction, high blood pressure during pregnancy, medical complications of pregnancy or maternal death).
 - A study of more than 35,000 pregnant and/or breastfeeding women who were monitored at the time of COVID-19 vaccination found no difference in the rate of side effects compared with non-pregnant individuals.
- The antibodies you make to fight COVID-19 following vaccination also pass to your baby, which may keep them safe after birth.
- The COVID-19 vaccine does NOT contain any live virus, any mercury, aluminum, formaldehyde or any substances harmful to you and/or baby, any human and/or animal blood or by product(s).

Breastfeeding women

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine while breastfeeding is safe, effective and highly recommended.

- Vaccines protect you from COVID-19 infection and help prevent you from passing it to your baby or other family members.
- You can continue breastfeeding after getting vaccinated; the vaccine is not detectable in breast milk.
- Antibodies have been shown to pass in the breastmilk after maternal vaccination and may protect your baby against COVID-19.
- Studies show that receiving a COVID-19 vaccine while breastfeeding does not disrupt your breastfeeding and does not have an adverse impact on your baby.

Those planning a pregnancy

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine while planning to become pregnant is safe, effective and highly recommended.
- COVID-19 vaccines do not cause male or female infertility and there is no evidence to suggest that they will cause infertility.
- Get both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine before getting pregnant to protect you and your future baby from the increased risks associated with COVID-19 infections in pregnancy.

* Source: Munshi L, Wright JK, Zipursky J, et al. *The incidence, severity, and management of COVID-19 in critically ill pregnant individuals.* *Science Briefs of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table.*