Health Facts for You

UW Health

COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding

It is your choice whether or not to get the COVID-19 vaccine. This handout will review the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccines to help you make an informed decision about the vaccine.

Multiple national pregnancy experts strongly recommend that pregnant and lactating people be vaccinated against COVID-19

Pregnancy and COVID-19

Although the overall risk of severe illness is low, you are at an **increased** risk for severe illness from COVID-19 if you are pregnant. You are more likely to end up in the intensive care unit (ICU), on a ventilator or die than non-pregnant COVID-19 patients. Preterm birth may also be more common with severe COVID.

Risks of COVID-19 Vaccine

There is not a lot of data about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines during pregnancy. Studies are ongoing. Based on how these vaccines work in the body, experts believe they are safe during pregnancy.

Studies in animals that received the COVID-19 vaccine before or during pregnancy found no safety concerns.

Benefits of COVID-19 Vaccines

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine may prevent COVID-19 infections and severe COVID-19 disease. It can also prevent COVID-19 complications.

These vaccines have no live virus so they cannot give you COVID-19. These vaccines do **not** contain ingredients that are known to be harmful to pregnant people or to the fetus.

Many other vaccines are safely given in pregnancy (such as: tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, and flu).

Side Effects of COVID-19 Vaccines

Side effects are normal. They are caused by your immune system's normal response to the vaccine.

- Injection site pain
- Injection site swelling
- Injection site redness
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Joint pain
- Fever
- Nausea
- Feeling unwell
- Swollen lymph nodes

COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant

We suggest that pregnant women receive the COVID-19 vaccine. You may choose to delay your COVID vaccine until after the first trimester. A persistent high fever during the first trimester could increase the risk of fetal complications. Take Tylenol® (acetaminophen) if you have a high fever.

COVID-19 Vaccines While Breastfeeding

We suggest that breastfeeding people receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine should not affect the safety of breastmilk. The vaccine does not contain the virus, so there is no risk of giving your baby COVID-19.

When you have an infection or get a vaccine, your body makes antibodies to fight the infection. These antibodies can pass into the breastmilk and then to the baby. This may help prevent your baby from getting COVID-19.

COVID-19 Vaccines While Trying to Conceive
We strongly suggest that those who are not pregnant get the COVID-19 vaccine. We also strongly suggest that you get the COVID-19 vaccine if you are thinking about or trying to get pregnant. You do not need to delay pregnancy after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

When to Call
Please ask your provider about any questions you may have about the vaccine.

For more information use the QR code below: