

COVID-19 Vaccines

* Information on COVID-19 vaccines is rapidly evolving, and this fact sheet could become outdated by the time you read it. For the most up to date information, please call MotherToBaby at 866-626-6847.

This sheet talks about COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This information should not take the place of medical care and advice from your healthcare provider.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus (called SARS-CoV-2). The virus easily spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets that come from our mouths and noses when we breathe, talk, cough, or sneeze. For more information on COVID-19, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/covid-19/>.

What are COVID-19 vaccines?

COVID-19 vaccines provide protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. Different kinds of COVID-19 vaccines are being researched and developed at this time. All of these vaccines are given by injection, and most of them require two shots that are given a few weeks apart.

One kind of COVID-19 vaccine is called a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. The mRNA vaccine does not contain live virus. The vaccine works by telling cells in the body to create harmless fragments (small pieces) of the virus that causes COVID-19. These fragments cannot cause COVID-19. However, they trigger an immune response in the body that helps make antibodies against the virus. You can learn more about the mRNA vaccine here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>.

The mRNA vaccines are not 100% effective at preventing COVID-19. In addition, it is not yet known how long the vaccines will provide protection against the virus, or if they will stop a person from spreading the virus if they have it. So, it is important to continue practicing preventive measures, such as wearing a face covering, avoiding close contact with those who are sick, staying 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds, and washing hands often. As more people become vaccinated, these recommendations may change over time.

For more general information about other kinds of vaccines, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet about vaccines at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/vaccines-pregnancy/>.

Is there anyone who shouldn't get the COVID-19 vaccine?

As with every vaccine, you should not get a COVID-19 vaccine if you have had a severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) to the vaccine or any ingredient in the vaccine. If you have had a severe allergic reaction to any other vaccine or type of injection, talk to your healthcare provider about whether or not you should get a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine.

I just got the COVID-19 vaccine. How long do I need to wait before I get pregnant?

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have not been studied in pregnancy. However, based on what is known about this and other vaccines, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) have said there is no need to wait to get pregnant after receiving the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. ACOG adds that if someone becomes pregnant after getting the first dose of the vaccine, they should still get the second dose as planned.

Does getting the COVID-19 vaccine increase the chance of miscarriage?

Miscarriage can occur in any pregnancy. The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have not been studied in pregnancy, so it is not known if the vaccines increase the chance for miscarriage. However, based on what is known about these and other vaccines, the CDC states that people who are pregnant can choose to get the vaccine if they are part of a group that is recommended to be vaccinated (such as healthcare workers). In addition, pregnancy testing is not routinely recommended before getting the vaccine. Talk with your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of getting the vaccine during pregnancy.

Does getting the COVID-19 vaccine increase the chance of birth defects or long-term problems for the baby?

Every pregnancy starts out with a 3-5% chance of having a birth defect. This is called the background risk. The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have not been studied in pregnancy, so it is not known if the vaccines increase the chance of birth defects or long-term problems for the baby. However, based on what is known about these and other vaccines, experts do not believe that mRNA vaccines would increase risks to a pregnant person or the developing baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of getting the vaccine during pregnancy.

Fever is a possible side effect of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines. A high fever in the first trimester can increase the chance of certain birth defects. Acetaminophen is usually recommended to reduce fever during pregnancy. Those who develop a fever after getting the vaccine should speak with their healthcare providers if possible to confirm that taking acetaminophen is the best way to lower it. For more information about fever and pregnancy, see the MotherToBaby fact sheet about hyperthermia at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/hyperthermia-pregnancy/>.

Does getting the COVID-19 vaccine increase the chance of other pregnancy complications?

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have not been studied in pregnancy, so it is not known if the vaccines increase the chance of pregnancy complications. However, people who get COVID-19 during pregnancy may have a higher chance of severe illness compared to people who are not pregnant. Having severe illness from COVID-19 may increase the chance of pregnancy complications such as preterm delivery (birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy). Getting the COVID-19 vaccine in pregnancy may help reduce the chance of these complications caused by COVID-19, by protecting the person who is pregnant against infection. Talk with your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of getting the vaccine during pregnancy.

Can I breastfeed if I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have not been studied for use in breastfeeding. However, experts do not believe that getting the vaccine while breastfeeding would pose a risk to a breastfeeding infant. Studies have shown that other kinds of vaccines that are routinely given in the United States are not harmful during breastfeeding. (Only the smallpox and yellow fever vaccines, which are not routinely given in the U.S., are not recommended for most people while breastfeeding.) According to the CDC, people who are breastfeeding can choose to get the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine if they are part of a group that is recommended to be vaccinated (such as healthcare workers). The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine does not recommend that people postpone or stop breastfeeding after getting the vaccine. Talk to your healthcare provider about all of your breastfeeding questions.

I got the COVID-19 vaccine. Can it make it harder for me to get my partner pregnant or increase the chance of birth defects?

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccine has not been studied for effects on male fertility. In general, exposures that fathers or sperm donors have are unlikely to increase the risks to a pregnancy. For more information, please see the MotherToBaby fact sheet Paternal Exposures at <https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets/paternal-exposures-pregnancy/>.

MotherToBaby is conducting a study looking at COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy. We are currently enrolling people who have received at least one dose of the vaccine during the month before becoming pregnant or at any time during pregnancy. To learn more or to sign up, please call 1-877-311-8972 or visit <https://mothertobaby.org/join-a-study-form/>.

Please click [here](#) to view references.

Questions? Call 866.626.6847 | Text 855.999.3525 | Email or Chat at [MotherToBaby.org](https://www.MotherToBaby.org).

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