

# COVID-19 Vaccine for OB Patients



## What we know about COVID-19 in pregnant people:

We know at this point that pregnant people who develop symptoms (fever, cough, and shortness of breath) with COVID-19 have a greater chance of becoming sicker with the virus than those who are not pregnant. This includes pregnant people who have chronic illnesses that put everyone, not just them, at a greater risk for severe illness. These include diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, and other conditions. COVID-19 vaccination is recommended and safe for all people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future. (For additional information, visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).)

## Is the vaccine safe for me and my baby? Can it affect my unborn baby's development?

- While the initial clinical trials for these vaccines did not include pregnant or breastfeeding people, ongoing studies have not shown that the vaccines cause any harm to pregnant people or their unborn babies, and there is no reason to believe they will cause harm.
- As of January 24, 2022, more than 190,000 pregnant people across the United States have chosen to receive the vaccines, and among a subset of these people that have enrolled in a pregnancy outcomes registry, there was no increased likelihood of miscarriage, low birth weight, or other complications.
- It is important to know, the vaccines are much less of a risk to you and your baby than the COVID-19 virus.

## Will the vaccine side effects affect my unborn baby?

- There is no evidence that these side effects have any impact on your unborn baby.
- Not everyone experiences side effects, but if you do, it is a sign that the vaccine is working. The most common ones with the current vaccines are soreness at the injection site, fatigue, headache, fever, and body, muscle, or joint aches. These should go away within a few days.
- Talk to your doctor about taking acetaminophen if you develop a fever or other vaccine-related side effects.

## Should I wait until my second or third trimester to receive the vaccine?

- There is no reason to believe receiving the vaccine during a certain trimester of pregnancy makes it any more or less safe.
- With some of the available vaccines requiring 2 shots, starting the process as soon as possible will protect you for a greater portion of your pregnancy.

## Should I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I am breastfeeding? Will the vaccine or any of its components pass through the breast milk to my baby?

- There is no reason to believe that the vaccines should cause harm due to breastfeeding.
- The vaccine is given in your arm, where your body finds the “spike protein” made by the vaccine and creates an antibody response that trains your immune system to fight the virus if it enters your body in the future.
- Because the vaccine is not something you are eating or drinking, it will not pass through your breast milk.
- As your body creates antibodies, some may be found in breast milk. There is no reason for concern as it may help boost your baby's immunity to the virus. Current studies are ongoing to learn more.

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# COVID-19 Vaccine for OB Patients (Continued)



## I just received or am planning to receive a non-COVID vaccine. Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine if you just received or are planning to receive a non-COVID vaccine.

An anti-D immunoglobulin, such as RhoGAM®, can be given to those who are planning or have recently received a COVID-19 vaccine.

## Which vaccine should I get?

- The CDC prefers an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna).
- The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen (J&J) vaccine is safe and effective. Those who are unable or unwilling to receive an mRNA vaccine can and should receive the J&J vaccine.

## Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine if I am under 18 years of age?

The Pfizer vaccine is recommended for those 5 years of age and older. The Moderna and J&J vaccines are recommended for those 18 years of age and older.

## Can I receive a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?

- It is recommended for pregnant people 12 years or older to get a booster dose.
- Those who are immunocompromised should talk with their doctor about additional doses.

## After the Vaccination

- V-safe™ is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccine. During these check-ins, you will be asked questions about your pregnancy and medical history. Depending on your answers, someone from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may call to check on you and get more information. Personal information and responses in v-safe are confidential and will be protected to the full extent allowed by law.
- The CDC is inviting people who received the COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy to participate in the v-safe COVID-19 Vaccine Pregnancy Registry. If you are enrolled in v-safe and report that you were pregnant at the time of vaccination or after vaccination, the registry staff may contact you to learn more.

- If you are unsure if you should get the vaccine, talk to your care provider.
- For the latest news about UPMC and the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit [UPMC.com/COVIDVaccine](https://www.upmc.com/COVIDVaccine).
- To learn more about the vaccine, please visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccine](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccine).

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