

COVID-19 Vaccine in Pregnant and Lactating Patients

Frequently Asked Questions

REV 1/29/2021

I am currently pregnant or lactating, should I get the vaccine?

Currently the American College of OB/GYN and the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine (high risk pregnancy experts) recommend the COVID-19 vaccine in pregnancy. (add short link)
<https://www.acog.org/en/News/News%20Releases/2021/01/ACOG%20and%20SMFM%20Joint%20Statement%20on%20WHO%20Recommendations%20Regarding%20COVID-19%20Vaccines%20and%20Pregnant%20Individuals>

I am currently pregnant or lactating, does my provider recommend I get the vaccine?

ECWG encourages patients who have an upcoming appointment to discuss it with her individual provider at that time. A discussion with your provider will include potential benefits of the vaccine balanced with risk factors you may have in your own medical history as well as your risk to acquire COVID-19. It is true that pregnant and lactating women were excluded from the initial clinical trials of the vaccine. A few women who receive the vaccine in the clinical trials did get pregnant, and the vaccine has also been administered to knowingly pregnant front-line healthcare workers. There are no reports of any problems with these pregnancies and they are continuing to monitor them. We anticipate there will be more data available on safety in pregnancy with time.

<https://www.baystatehealth.org/news/2020/12/pregnancy-covid-vaccine-safety>
<https://www.baystatehealth.org/-/media/files/covid19/vaccine-info-for-pregnant-people-updated-12-28.pdf?la=en>

While we do encourage and recommend the vaccine in pregnancy and in lactating women, we are also supportive of their decision to not vaccinate. In this scenario, we certainly advise continued strict social distancing, masking, and handwashing.

I am currently pregnant, what are some of my risks if I get the vaccine?

Pregnancy is an independent risk factor for severe illness with COVID-19 infection, particularly in women who are symptomatic. There is an increased risk of ICU admissions, mechanical ventilation, and death among pregnant patients with symptomatic COVID-19 infections compared to symptomatic nonpregnant patients. There are also reported increases in risk of preterm birth and stillbirth in both symptomatic and asymptomatic patients with COVID-19 infection. Patients who have additional medical concerns including a body mass index greater than 35 kg/m², diabetes, heart disorders, and older age women appear to have a particularly elevated risk of adverse maternal outcomes. Other conditions that may increase risk of severe

illness from COVID-19 infection include cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, immunocompromised state, sickle cell disease, and smoking.

When can I get the vaccine at ECWG?

ECWG does hope to be able to provide the vaccine to our patients in our office soon. Currently the vaccine is limited. Patients can get up to date info on vaccines offered in the community at <https://www.stcharleshealthcare.org/covid-19>.

How is the vaccine administered?

The vaccine is a 2-dose series that is administered in the arm, intramuscularly either 3 or 4 weeks apart depending on the brand. Patient should receive the same brand for both doses. If they miss the window for the second dose they can still be administered as soon as they are able to do so. The vaccine is recommended in patients who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 and recovered as well. The vaccine cannot be given to someone who is acutely ill with COVID-19 or any other viral illness. It will also not be given to someone who has received a different vaccine within the last 3-4 weeks including the flu, Tdap, etc.

How soon does the vaccination start working?

This vaccine does have a high level of efficacy, approximately 95% after the second dose. It takes 1-2 weeks following the second dose to be considered fully vaccinated.

What symptoms could I have after the vaccination?

Postvaccination signs and symptoms are typically mild to moderate. They typically occur within the first 3 days of the vaccination. The symptoms are typically worse after the second dose. They include soreness in the arm, headache, muscle aches, potentially fever. Pregnant woman who experience a fever after the vaccination are encouraged to take acetaminophen.

ECWG encourages patients who have an upcoming appointment to discuss further questions with her individual provider at that time. Thank you!