

# CAN I GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE IF I'M PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING?

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Health experts, including the *American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists* and the *Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine*, believe that all the vaccines approved for use in the U.S. are safe for both pregnant and breastfeeding people.

## Pregnancy

The COVID-19 vaccines were not tested on pregnant people in the trial phases. However, based on the way each of the approved vaccines works in the body, experts believe they are safe for you and your baby.

## Why should I get vaccinated if I'm pregnant?

You and your baby may be at greater risk from having COVID-19 than you are from taking the vaccine. Pregnant people are more at risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 compared to those who are not pregnant. If you also have other health issues, such as high blood pressure or diabetes, your risk can be even higher. Severe COVID-19 increases your risk for having your baby too early (preterm birth). Vaccines reduce your chances of getting severe COVID-19. Also, the antibodies you make from the vaccine may pass to your baby and offer some protection from COVID-19 for your newborn.

## What should I ask my doctor?

Choosing to get the vaccine while you are pregnant is an important decision. If you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant, it may help to talk with your doctor or clinic. Here are some things to talk about:

- What is the level of COVID-19 in your community and how fast is it spreading?
- What is your personal risk of getting COVID-19 based on your work or other activities?
- What is the risk of having COVID-19 to you and your unborn or newborn baby?
- Where are you in your pregnancy? When is the best time for you to get vaccinated?
- Is there any new information about the vaccines and pregnancy?
- How can you safely treat any side effects of the vaccine? Which over-the-counter medicines are safest for you?



If you don't have a doctor, call 211 for help finding care. They can help you even if you don't have health insurance. You can also call the Health Department's Primary Care Clinics at 503-988-5558 to enroll as a new patient.

Visit <https://multco.us/health/primary-care-clinics> for more information on the Health Department's Primary Care Clinics.

If you choose *not* to get the vaccine while pregnant, be extra careful to take other precautions against COVID-19: wear a face mask covering, stay six feet from others not in your household, avoid large gatherings, and wash your hands often. Consider taking the vaccine soon after you give birth.

## Will the vaccine affect my ability to get pregnant in the future?

There is no evidence that the vaccines will affect your ability to get pregnant or have babies. Rumors that link COVID-19 vaccines to infertility are false.

## Breastfeeding

The COVID-19 vaccines were not tested on breastfeeding people in the trial phases. However, health experts believe that the vaccines are safe for lactating people and babies who are breastfeeding.

The COVID-19 vaccines are non-replicating vaccines – meaning the virus cells in the vaccine can't make more of themselves and can't make you sick. Non-replicating vaccines have been shown to be safe for breastfeeding people and their babies.

## Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I'm breastfeeding?

A recent study found COVID-19 vaccines were very good at getting the body to make antibodies against the COVID-19 virus in pregnant and breastfeeding people.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine can help keep you from getting COVID-19 and can help protect your baby. You can share disease fighting antibodies through breast milk with your newborn and help protect them.

You do not have to postpone or stop breastfeeding if you want to get a vaccine.



## Vaccine pregnancy registry

Scientists are learning more about the vaccine as more people get it, including pregnant and breastfeeding people.

If you are pregnant and take a COVID-19 vaccine, consider joining the V-safe COVID-19 Vaccine Pregnancy Registry. This voluntary study is helping scientists study the effects of the vaccine on pregnancy. People who choose to enroll in the registry will be contacted several times throughout their pregnancy for health check-ins.

Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafepregnancyregistry.html> for more information on the V-safe COVID-19 Vaccine Pregnancy Registry.