

## COVID Vaccination Information

The doctors of Adams Patterson Gynecology and Obstetrics recommend that all women including pregnant, postpartum and lactating women be vaccinated against COVID-19. Getting a vaccine can help protect both you and your baby. Pregnant women have a higher risk of severe illness, hospitalization, ICU admission and death from COVID-19 than nonpregnant women. The Delta variant is causing an increase in admissions for severely ill pregnant women in our community. Pregnant women who become seriously ill with COVID-19 are at increased risk of preterm birth and pregnancy loss. The vaccines are very effective at preventing COVID-19 severe illness and death and have been shown to be safe in pregnancy.

This recommendation is consistent with those of The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, The Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine and the CDC.

Unfortunately, anxiety caused by misinformation on social media and unscrupulous websites is preventing people from getting vaccinated and causing much unnecessary illness. We'd like to address a few common concerns here.

**MYTH:** COVID-19 vaccines are not safe for pregnant women.

**FACT:** Available data shows vaccination during pregnancy has been safe and effective among the more than 139,000 women who have received a COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. These data have been collected from Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and from the V-Safe COVID-19 vaccine pregnancy registry. Safety data show no concerns for vaccinated pregnant or breastfeeding women and their babies. To date, there has been no connection to any increased risk of complications after getting a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy. The risk of complications of SARS-CoV-2 infection during pregnancy is *much* higher than any risk associated with COVID-19 vaccination.

**MYTH:** COVID-19 vaccines cross the placenta.

**FACT:** COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy and breastfeeding provides protection for both mother and baby. When a vaccine is administered, it works in the muscle where the vaccine is given—It does not cross to the baby directly. The body then recognizes the vaccine and generates a response in the form of antibodies. These protective antibodies then cross the placenta to the baby or enter the breast and are passed on to baby through breastmilk.

This process is not unique to COVID-19 vaccines. Influenza and pertussis (whooping cough) are recommended vaccines during pregnancy. Vaccination during pregnancy has been found to be very effective for protecting newborns from these diseases.

**MYTH:** Breastfeeding women should wait to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

**FACT:** Breastfeeding women can get a COVID-19 vaccine and still breastfeed if they have already been vaccinated. antibodies stimulated by the vaccine can be passed through breastmilk and help protect a baby from harmful viruses.

**MYTH:** COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility.

**FACT:** There are no data to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines negatively affect fertility or a woman's ability to conceive after getting vaccinated. Some misinformation claims pregnant women who receive a COVID-19 vaccine reject a protein that is vital for the placenta, which can reportedly make a woman infertile. This has been completely disproven. To date, no vaccine is known to cause fertility issues.

**MYTH:** COVID-19 vaccines can change a woman's menstrual cycle.

**FACT:** There have been anecdotal reports that COVID-19 vaccines affect the menstrual cycle. Menstrual cycles can be affected by a variety of things, including stress, which many have experienced over the past year. It's not known at this time whether people are seeing changes in their menstrual cycles in relation to the vaccine or other factors such as COVID-19. The National Institutes of Health has shown interest in studying these reports. At this point, no causal link between vaccination and irregular menses has been established.

**MYTH:** COVID-19 vaccination should be avoided in the first trimester.

**FACT:** COVID-19 vaccination is safe any time during pregnancy.

**MYTH:** COVID-19 vaccines can make pregnant women sick.

**FACT:** Pregnant women have not reported different side effects from non-pregnant individuals after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Side effects from vaccination are normal signs that a person's body is building protection and should go away within a few days. Common side effects are arm soreness, fatigue and body aches.

**MYTH:** mRNA technology is new and cannot be trusted by pregnant women.

While COVID-19 vaccines are relatively new, the technology behind them has been around for many years. According to the CDC, mRNA vaccines are held to the same rigorous safety and effectiveness standards as all other types of vaccines in the U.S. These vaccines cannot give someone COVID-19 and they do not affect or interact with your own DNA in any way. mRNA vaccines are not live virus vaccines, which are the only vaccines that are generally avoided during pregnancy.

Questions about COVID-19? Our doctors will gladly answer any questions you may have.

Other Resources:

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>