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HSC Health and Social Care

COVID-19 vaccination

A guide for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding

Please read this before your vaccination

Find out more at www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccines available in the UK have been shown to be effective and to have a good safety profile. The current COVID-19 vaccines do not contain live coronavirus and cannot infect a pregnant woman or her unborn baby in the womb.

COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy

Although clinical trials on the use of COVID-19 vaccines during pregnancy are not advanced, the available data do not indicate any harm to pregnancy.

In addition to any pre-existing risk factors a pregnant woman may have, in the later stages of pregnancy women are at increased risk of becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19. If this happens, your baby is two to three times more likely to be born prematurely, which can affect their long-term health.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has therefore advised that pregnant women should be offered vaccination at the same time as the rest of the population, based on their age and clinical risk group.

There is now extensive experience of the use of the Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna vaccines during pregnancy in the USA with no safety concerns. These vaccines are therefore the preferred vaccines to offer to pregnant women of any age.

Pregnant women who commenced vaccination with AstraZeneca, however, are advised to complete the course with the same vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccine

What does this mean for me?

If you are pregnant you will be able to receive a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other women of your age:

- You may wish to discuss having it with your doctor or midwife.
- Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are the preferred vaccines for pregnant women of any age, because of more extensive experience of their use in pregnancy.
- If you decide to have a COVID-19 vaccine, please tell the vaccination team that you are pregnant so that this can be recorded.
- Pregnant women who commenced vaccination with AstraZeneca, however, are advised to complete the course with the same vaccine.

If you have had the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and then become pregnant or find out you are pregnant:

- you may wish to discuss having the second dose with your doctor or midwife.
- unless you had serious side effects, you are advised to complete the course with the same vaccine during your pregnancy or you can wait until you have had your baby.

Breastfeeding

There is no known risk associated with any current COVID-19 vaccines whilst breastfeeding. The JCVI advises that breastfeeding women may be offered any suitable COVID-19 vaccine.

Talk to your doctor or midwife if you have any concerns.

There is no need to avoid pregnancy after COVID-19 vaccination.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and Royal College of Midwives (RCM) have a decision guide and other useful information on COVID-19 vaccines and pregnancy (**www.rcog.org.uk** and **www.rcm.org.uk/guidance-for-pregnant-women**)

Vaccination, helping to protect those most vulnerable.

HSC Public Health Agency

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