

QUESTION: Should women who are pregnant receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, such as those made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech?

DISCUSSION:

As of 28 December 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the independent Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) state the following on the CDC's web site:

- Pregnant people are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19
- There are limited data about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines for pregnant people, but based on how mRNA vaccines work, experts believe they are unlikely to pose a specific risk for people who are pregnant
- mRNA vaccines do not contain the live virus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19, so the vaccine cannot cause someone to develop COVID-19
- mRNA vaccines do not interact with a person's DNA, because the mRNA does not enter the nucleus of the cell
- Side effects can still occur with either of these currently available COVID-19 vaccines, especially after the second dose in the two-shot series, but these side effects are not expected to be any different for pregnant people than for non-pregnant people
- Getting vaccinated is a personal choice for pregnant people

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) refers to the CDC's web site that contains the bullet points listed above.

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) published a statement on 01 December 2020 reference SARS-CoV-2 vaccination in pregnancy and in it stated that, "..., pregnant and lactating women who are otherwise eligible should be offered the vaccine."

ANSWER: The CDC and ACOG do not feel there are any specific risks to receiving an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant given our current understanding of how they work. Additionally, the SMFM recommends pregnant women who are eligible should receive the vaccine. Ultimately, the decision to be vaccinated with either the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant is a personal one, and potential recipients should raise any questions or concerns they have with their medical provider, so the best choice can be made.

LINKS:

CDC web page address:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html>

ACOG web page address:

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

SMFM statement:

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.smfm.org/media/2591/SMFM_Vaccine_Statement_12-1-20_\(final\).pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.smfm.org/media/2591/SMFM_Vaccine_Statement_12-1-20_(final).pdf)

QUESTION: Should lactating women who are breastfeeding receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, such as those made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech?

DISCUSSION:

As of 28 December 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the independent Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) state the following on their web site:

- There are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in lactating women
- There are no data on the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant or on milk production/excretion
- mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant
- People who are breastfeeding and are recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine may choose to be vaccinated

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that breastfeeding women get a COVID-19 vaccine, and state that there is no need to stop breastfeeding if you want to get a vaccine.

The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) published a statement on 01 December 2020 reference SARS-CoV-2 vaccination in pregnancy and in it stated that, "..., pregnant and lactating women who are otherwise eligible should be offered the vaccine."

ANSWER: The ACOG and SMFM both recommend the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine while breastfeeding. However, deciding to receive it still remains a personal decision. Potential recipients should raise any questions or concerns with their medical provider, so the best choice can be made.

LINKS:

CDC web page address:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html>

ACOG web page address:

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

SMFM statement:

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.smfm.org/media/2591/SMFM_Vaccine_Statement_12-1-20_\(final\).pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.smfm.org/media/2591/SMFM_Vaccine_Statement_12-1-20_(final).pdf)