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I am pregnant and have been offered a COVID-19 vaccination. What are my options?

Vaccination is being offered to some pregnant women including health and social care workers and those with high risk medical conditions

Trials testing the vaccine in pregnant and breastfeeding women have not yet been completed. Whether to get the vaccine in pregnancy is your choice. The information below will help you make an informed choice about whether to get the COVID-19 vaccine if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.

Your options:



Get a COVID-19 vaccine
or



Wait for more information about the vaccine in pregnancy

Who can be vaccinated?

COVID-19 vaccination is only offered to two groups of pregnant women:

1. Those with high risk medical conditions (clinically extremely vulnerable) who have a **greater risk of severe illness** from COVID-19
2. Health or social care workers – who are at **very high risk of catching COVID-19**

Underlying medical conditions include:

- organ transplant
- currently undergoing cancer treatment
- bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the last 6 months
- significant lung condition, e.g. cystic fibrosis or severe asthma
- conditions that significantly increases the risk of infection, e.g. severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID) or homozygous sickle cell disease
- currently taking medication to suppress your immune system, sufficient to increase the risk of infection
- conditions affecting your spleen, including. having your spleen removed
- Down's syndrome
- significant kidney conditions and/or on dialysis
- significant heart conditions; or
- your hospital doctor or GP feels that there are other reasons why you may get more severe illness if you develop COVID-19

If you are not a health or social care worker and do not have any of these medical conditions, then you will not currently be offered vaccination during pregnancy.

What are the benefits of the vaccination?

✓ COVID-19 may be more dangerous in pregnancy

Studies have shown that hospital admission and severe illness may be more common in pregnant women (compared to those not pregnant), especially those in the third trimester of pregnancy, and that preterm birth is more likely (compared to pregnant women without COVID-19). Pregnant women with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk of severe illness.

✓ Vaccination is effective in preventing COVID-19 infection

✓ You cannot get COVID-19 from vaccination

- COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain live coronavirus
- Vaccines do NOT contain any additional ingredients that are harmful to pregnant women or their babies
- Other non-live vaccines (whooping cough, influenza) are considered to be safe for pregnant women and their unborn babies.

What are the risks of the vaccination?

✗ The COVID-19 vaccines have not yet been tested specifically in pregnant women

- COVID-19 vaccines have been given to large numbers of people to ensure they meet stringent standards of effectiveness and safety.
- Insufficient evidence is available for pregnant women, although available data do not indicate any safety concern or harm to pregnancy. More information may come from studies in the future.
- We do not know whether the vaccine works as well in pregnancy.
- We do not know whether there are unique downsides in pregnancy, like different side effects, an increased risk of miscarriage or problems with the baby's development

✗ Side effects from the vaccine are common. These do not affect pregnancy, but may include:

- injection site reactions (sore arm)
- fatigue
- headache
- muscle pain
- fever, chills
- joint pain

 If you think that you may be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination, please discuss this with your hospital doctor or midwife.

 If you decide to have a COVID-19 vaccine, please tell the vaccination team that you are pregnant so that this can be recorded.