

Why You Should Get The COVID-19 Vaccine If You Are Pregnant

Frequently Asked Questions with Sources



Queen's University Initiative. Infographic by Iku Nwosu, Medical Student. Reviewed by OBGYNs: Dr. Olga Bougie, MD, MPH, FRCSC; Dr. Graeme Smith, MD, PhD, FRCSC; Dr. Laura Gaudet, MD, MSc, FRCSC. Graphic edits by Stephanie Jiang, Medical Student.

The MoTHERS Program

"Why are doctors becoming more concerned about pregnant people contracting COVID-19?"

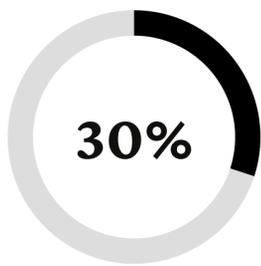
In Canada and across the world, the burden of the pandemic has rapidly increased due to the highly infectious variants.

An increasing number of pregnant patients infected with COVID-19 are being admitted to **intensive care units (ICU)**.

ICU care is for a hospital's sickest patients.

It entails life-sustaining measures including intubation, ventilation, oxygen, medications that maintain blood pressure, and extensive monitoring by teams of health care professionals.

While most people from the general population with COVID-19 experience mild illness, **otherwise healthy pregnant patients with COVID-19 are getting very sick, very quickly.**



As of April 20, 2021, 30% of Sinai Health ICU patients were pregnant or postpartum patients.
(Dr. Wendy Whittle, Sinai Health)

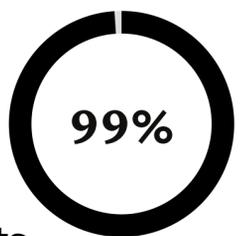
In cases of severe illness, **emergency C-sections** are being performed in the ICU for both maternal and fetal safety.

"COVID-19 is usually a mild illness, and I have a healthy pregnancy. Why should I be vaccinated?"

"The vaccine has risks. How much do we even know about it? I have enough going on with my pregnancy as it is."

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) supports the use of **all available COVID-19 vaccines approved in Canada** in any trimester of pregnancy and during breastfeeding in accordance with regional eligibility.

No clots in > 99% of vaccine recipients.



Arterial and venous thrombosis associated with low platelets events following the adenovirus vector COVID-19 vaccines (AstraZeneca, COVISHIELD, Janssen) occur in as few as 1 in every 125,000 to 1 in 1 million people.

Preliminary findings do not show obvious safety concerns among pregnant persons who received vaccination.

The vaccine has now been shown to:

- 1) Increase maternal vaccine-specific IgG antibodies. These can get across to **help protect baby** after delivery as long as you get the vaccine at least 3 weeks before delivery.
- 2) Increase vaccine-specific IgA antibodies which in **breast milk provides mucosal protection from COVID19 for your baby.**

There are other vaccines recommended in pregnancy for similar reasons. These include: Influenza, Tdap (*Whooping cough*), and more.

"Are there any benefits from the vaccine to my baby?"



The Bottom Line

Every medical decision should be made after weighing the risks and benefits for yourself with the input of a medical professional.

However, with widespread community transmission of the virus variants, understand that **the risk of getting very sick with COVID19 is peaking.**

GET VACCINATED.

Take the first vaccine you are offered.
Especially if you are pregnant.

Sources

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2. Toronto critical care doctors are sounding the alarm on the mounting number of pregnant COVID-19 patients in their intensive care units: https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/video?cid=sm%3Atrueanthe%3Actvtoronto%3Atwitterpost&clipId=2184430&taid=607e66dbc18bb900010d31bf&utm_campaign=trueAnthem%3A+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=facebook
3. The BMJ - Clinical manifestations, risk factors, and maternal and perinatal outcomes of coronavirus disease 2019 in pregnancy: living systematic review and meta-analysis: <https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m3320>
4. SOGC Statement on the COVID-19 vaccines and rare adverse outcomes of thrombosis associated with low platelets: https://sogc.org/en/content/featured-news/SOGC_Statement_on_the_COVID-19_vaccines_and_rare_adverse_outcomes_of_%20thrombosis.aspx
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8. Vaccination and pregnancy: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccination-pregnancy.html>