

COVID-19 Vaccine:

for Individuals Who are Planning to get Pregnant,
Currently Pregnant or Breastfeeding

Public Health Factsheet

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Manitoba 

Immunization is one of the most important accomplishments in public health. Over the past 50 years, immunization has led to the elimination, containment and control of disease that were once very common in Canada¹. Vaccines help our immune system recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause disease.

What are the risks of getting COVID-19 during pregnancy?

There is strong evidence that pregnant people are more likely to become severely ill if they get COVID-19. This may result in a higher risk of hospitalization and admission to an intensive care unit (ICU). COVID-19 infection during pregnancy is also associated with increased risks to the baby. This may include preterm birth, low birthweight and admission to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Like everyone else, pregnant people need to protect themselves from exposure to COVID-19, seek appropriate testing and call their health care provider if they develop symptoms.

Is it safe to receive a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy?

Yes. Current evidence shows that it is safe for pregnant people to receive COVID-19 mRNA vaccines (Pfizer/Comirnaty™ and Moderna/Spikevax™) during any trimester. The rate of side effects after getting the vaccine is the same for both pregnant and non-pregnant people. Vaccination does not increase the risk for miscarriage, stillbirth, low birth weight, preterm birth or neonatal intensive care admission.

Should individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. People who are pregnant or breastfeeding should receive the updated XBB.1.5 formulation of the COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy is effective at protecting against severe disease, hospitalization, ICU admission, and death from COVID-19 infection. As well, infants of people who were vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy experienced lower rates of Delta and Omicron infection in the first four to six months of life compared to infants born to individuals who were unvaccinated.

Should individuals who are planning to become pregnant get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for people who are planning a pregnancy. Those intending to become pregnant don't need to delay pregnancy after vaccination with an mRNA vaccine.

Millions of people have received an mRNA vaccine in Canada and around the world. Data has shown no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines cause fertility problems in women or men. This includes no difference in:

- pregnancy rates
- ectopic pregnancies (pregnancy that develops outside the uterus)
- miscarriages
- ovarian function
- number of fertilized embryos

¹The Public Health Agency of Canada

Which COVID-19 vaccine should pregnant or breastfeeding individuals receive?

Pregnant and breastfeeding individuals who have never been vaccinated against COVID-19 can receive one dose of the updated XBB.1.5 formulation of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. Pregnant and breastfeeding individuals who have completed their primary series should receive a dose of the updated XBB.1.5 formulation in the fall of 2023 if it has been at least 6 months since their last COVID-19 vaccine or infection, whichever is later.

Other vaccines can be administered on the same day, or any time before or after getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

For more information

Speak with your health care provider. If you do not have a health care provider, call Health Links – Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll free in Manitoba).

Or, access the following websites:

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada: www.sogc.org/

Manitoba Health: www.manitoba.ca/covid19/index.html

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html
