

COVID-19 Vaccine: Preconception, Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Fact Sheet

This factsheet is meant to help you make an **informed decision** about the COVID-19 vaccine if you are thinking about having a baby, if you are pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding. Pregnant individuals are at an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Leading health experts in Canada agree that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and offer pregnant and breastfeeding individuals protection from severe COVID-19 illness.

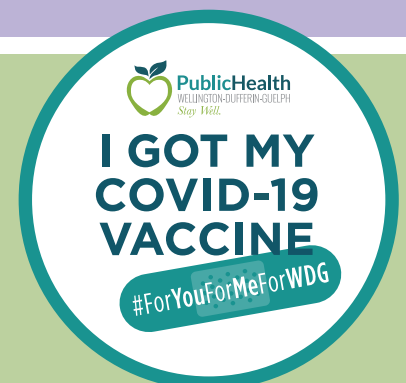


The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) recommends vaccination at any stage of pregnancy or while breastfeeding, if no medical concern exists. This is because a COVID-19 infection at any stage in pregnancy can be severe.

New research shows that mRNA vaccines are the preferred vaccine to use in pregnancy. **The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI)** recommends a complete two-dose vaccine series with an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) to people who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

If you are planning to get pregnant:

- When possible, get fully vaccinated prior to becoming pregnant.
- There is currently no evidence of infertility associated with COVID-19 vaccines.





If you are currently pregnant:

- Being pregnant puts you at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Protect yourself and your baby by getting vaccinated.
- COVID-19 vaccine prevents severe illness in individuals who are pregnant.
- Severe COVID-19 illness in pregnancy can cause complications such as:
 - » preterm birth
 - » neonatal complications
 - » fetal distress
 - » ICU admission
 - » hospitalization
 - » invasive ventilation
 - » death
- The risk of these complications increases for pregnant individuals who are over 35 years of age or have pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension or obesity.
- There are currently no known harmful effects to your baby or increased risks of miscarriage or birth defects from the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The antibodies that mRNA vaccines produce in pregnant individuals are comparable to those produced in non-pregnant individuals. These antibodies transfer across the placenta, providing protection to the baby.

If you are breastfeeding:

- Protect yourself and your baby by getting vaccinated.
- Recent studies show those who are breastfeeding and have received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine have developed antibodies in their breastmilk. This may offer additional protection for babies.



More detailed information can be found at pcmch.on.ca/COVID-19Vaccine.

If you would like to speak to a Public Health Nurse, please call 1-800-265-7293, ext. 7006, Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.