



# COVID-19

## **FAQ for Planned Parenthood Staff on Issues Related to Fertility, Pregnancy and Lactation and COVID-19 Vaccines**

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### **Q: Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?**

Yes. If you're pregnant or breastfeeding, and eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, you can get the vaccine if you want it. In some states, pregnancy is included in the list of health conditions that make you eligible for the vaccine. Talk with your doctor or nurse if you have questions about whether the COVID-19 vaccine is right for you.

Although pregnant people were not specifically included in the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccine trials, some participants did become pregnant after receiving the vaccine. There have been no problems reported in those people or in the many more pregnant people who have been vaccinated since. The Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is currently being studied in pregnant people and findings from that particular study should be available soon, but based on all the information we have so far, there's no evidence that the vaccine is unsafe if you're pregnant or breastfeeding.

The CDC recently released information based on COVID vaccinations provided to over 30,000 people during pregnancy. No unexpected pregnancy or infant outcomes have been observed related to COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy. Data has demonstrated that side effects and adverse events observed among pregnant individuals did not indicate any safety concerns. Pregnant people are more likely to die or get very sick from COVID-19 than people who aren't pregnant. And pregnant people who have COVID-19 may have a higher risk of pregnancy complications, like early birth. So if you're pregnant, it's important to do what you can to avoid getting COVID-19 — wear a mask and maintain social distancing — whether or not you get the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Q. How do the mRNA vaccines work?**

The mRNA vaccine — like all vaccines, whether for measles or polio — teaches your immune system how to fight a disease. But with new mRNA technology these vaccines teach your body how to protect itself without actually including a weak version of the germ that causes the disease itself. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines work by equipping your body to build a piece of the virus. Once it does so, your body's immune system is programmed to react to attack it — learning how to kill the virus itself. Whether you get the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, it

works by teaching your body what it needs to attack that germ — all without making any long term changes to your body. The only difference between the two vaccines is what it uses to teach your immune system that new skill. While these mRNA vaccines are new, the technology has long been researched for e for many viruses, including Zika, the flu, and others.

**Q. Does the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility, sterility or miscarriage?**

No. The COVID-19 vaccine doesn't make you sterile or affect your fertility. Misinformation has been spread on social media claiming that the vaccines make your body attack reproductive organs, leading to infertility. This is completely false and is not based on any science or research. Our bodies are smart and the vaccine trains them to focus their attack on the coronavirus, without attacking our internal organs. COVID-19 vaccines don't give you COVID-19, make you sick, or change your DNA or genetic material. There is no evidence that a person will have problems getting pregnant after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. In fact, during the vaccine trials, about the same number of people became pregnant in both the placebo group and the vaccine group.

**Q: Will the vaccine cause autism or developmental issues to any children I have in the future?**

Vaccines do not cause autism. mRNA vaccines, like the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, do not change your DNA. Your body gets rid of the material in the vaccine once it's done using it. Therefore nothing from the vaccines can be passed down genetically to children.

**Q: How can I trust a vaccine that was developed so quickly?**

While COVID-19 is relatively new to us, decades of research have gone into understanding the science of the mRNA vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna. Data from the COVID-19 vaccine studies have been reviewed by experts inside and outside the FDA and CDC, and indicate the COVID vaccines authorized for emergency use are safe and effective

All of the COVID-19 vaccines were researched with extremely high safety standards to make sure they were both effective AND safe. The FDA and many other top medical, research, and health care organizations reviewed the data and all came to the same conclusion — that the vaccines were safe and effective. The speed at which the pharmaceutical companies were able to research, test, and make the vaccines is a testament to what can happen when we collectively invest in and prioritize public health solutions and innovation.

**Q. When during pregnancy should I get vaccinated?**

If you choose to get vaccinated, we recommend that you get it as soon as the vaccine is available to you. But there is no specific time during pregnancy when you should or shouldn't get vaccinated. You do not need to delay getting pregnant after you get a vaccine. Since the current vaccines require two doses, if you find out you are pregnant after you have the first dose

of a two dose vaccine, you should still get the second dose to have the full protection from COVID-19.

**Q: One of the possible side effects of the vaccine is a fever, what should I do if I'm pregnant and get a fever after getting the vaccine?**

If you experience fever following vaccination, you should take acetaminophen (Tylenol) if you are not allergic to it. Acetaminophen has been proven safe for use in pregnancy and does not appear to interfere with the effectiveness of the vaccine. If you have any concerns about your symptoms you should speak with your health care provider.

Additional Resources:

CDC - [Vaccination Considerations for People Who Are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#)

CDC - [Presentation for ACIP on V-safe data and pregnancy](#)

NIH [Presentation on COVID-19 Vaccine in Pregnant Women](#)

Scientific American - [Why COVID-19 Vaccines Are Likely Safe for Pregnant People](#)

ACOG- [Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19](#)