

FERTILITY FACT SHEET

SHOULD I GET THE COVID VACCINE IF I AM PREGNANT?

One quick internet search and you may be overwhelmed! And in this day of, might I say, interesting fictitious news stories and personal agendas, it can be hard to know who to trust on this subject. We know you have worked tremendously hard for this pregnancy and that this may be your one chance to be parents. So, we **MUST** get it right!

The doctors at RSC have reviewed the available literature and recommendations from advocacy groups that have had access to the original scientific data. **Our belief is that pregnant patient should be ALLOWED the opportunity to get the vaccine.** Pregnant women were not included in the current studies of the vaccine safety and efficacy. Therefore, it is difficult for RSC to make a statement that the COVID-19 Vaccine is safe. Additionally, there is no data or science to indicate that pregnant women and their fetuses would be at risk from the current vaccines on the market for COVID-19. So that leads us to individualize the discussion based upon several factors:

1. What is the risk in your community of getting COVID-19?
2. What is your personal risk based upon your daily activities/ workplace?
3. What is your risk of serious complications from COVID-19? Serious complications in pregnancy?
4. Do you have any contraindications to the vaccine?
5. Do you have the ability to lower your risk of getting COVID-19 in any other way than the vaccine?

For example, if you are in a community that has a very low incidence of COVID-19 and you do not have a job that places you around others, and you have no underlying health risks and a very uncomplicated pregnancy, it may be just fine for you to limit your contact with others until the baby is born and NOT get the vaccine. (But please take care of yourself emotionally and reach out to others for virtual support!) On the other hand, if you have asthma or heart disease, which can become worse in pregnancy, and work around others, especially children that are not able to get the vaccine at present, you may decide that vaccine is right for you!



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HOW DO I GET THE VACCINE:

RSC will not be able to provide the vaccine to patients. Most likely your primary health care provider and local pharmacies will be providing it, first to health care workers and those at high risk, then later to the general public. The Pfizer vaccine and Moderna vaccine will require 2 doses 21 days apart.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE VACCINE:

The vaccine has some side effects and here are some brief reports of those:

“Side effects may occur in the first 3 days after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. These include mild to moderate fever, headache, and muscle aches. In the COVID-19 trials, less than 4% of people developed a fever after the first dose, and about 16% developed a fever after the second dose. Experts recommend that pregnant people receiving the COVID-19 vaccine who develop fever take acetaminophen (Tylenol). This medication is safe to use during pregnancy and does not affect how the vaccine works.” SMFM statement 2020

“The injection into your arm won’t feel different than any other vaccine, but the rate of short-lived side effects does appear higher than a flu shot. Tens of thousands of people have already received the vaccines, and none of them have [reported any serious](#) health problems. The side effects, which can resemble the symptoms of Covid-19, last about a day and appear more likely after the second dose. Early reports from vaccine trials suggest some people might need to take a day off from work because they feel lousy after receiving the second dose. In the Pfizer study, about half developed fatigue. Other side effects occurred in at least 25 to 33 percent of patients, sometimes more, including headaches, chills and muscle pain. While these experiences aren’t pleasant, they are a good sign that your own immune system is mounting a potent response to the vaccine that will provide long-lasting immunity.” — Abby Goodnough, Carl Zimmer

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE VACCINE:

Initial studies show the Pfizer vaccine to be 90% effective in preventing COVID-19. They determined this by giving ½ of the 43,538 volunteers the vaccine and ½ a placebo. They then collected data on subjects that had symptoms at least 7 days after the second dose. 90 patients in the placebo arm had symptoms of COVID and 19 in the vaccine arm. We assume that each group had equal risks of getting COVID. It is



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important to know that the available data is about getting COVID-19, not about developing antibodies. As you can see, there were people in both groups that still had COVID-19 symptoms, so it is still critical to use precautions like masks, hand-washing, and avoiding close prolonged contact with people who may have the virus. The vaccine may lower your risk of contracting COVID-19 but will not eliminate your risk.

CONCERNS FOR THE FETUS:

Pregnancy is an amazing thing- the pregnant woman is growing a human being inside her body! Every pregnancy has a risk of developmental or structural problems in the child and no one wants to increase that risk by getting a vaccine. The current COVID-19 vaccine is not a live vaccine and so it will not give you the virus. The Pfizer vaccine uses mRNA technology to introduce a small particle that resembles a part of the virus to induce an immune response. Those who are concerned about the vaccine are typically concerned about the body's immune response and whether this can affect the growing fetus. Other vaccines that use this same process to induce an immune response, like flu vaccines, diphtheria, and tetanus have been given in pregnancy for a long time and we have not seen a greater incidence of developmental problems—and this process can even help protect the newborn from these diseases for a period of time.

WHAT NEXT:

While it still might be hard to make a decision about what to do if you are pregnant and offered the vaccine, we hope this information can help you with your RSC doctor think about the pros and cons, the knowns and unknowns, and do what is right for you. Parenting is a process of making the best decision with the information you have at the time in the best interest of your child and then trusting that you will figure out what to do next. I wish you well in this process and please know we are here to support you!



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You may find these links helpful:

Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine:

https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.sfm.org/media/2640/COVID_vaccine_12.15.pdf

ACOG statement: <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-pregnant-and-lactating-patients-against-covid-19>

ASRM statement: https://www.asrm.org/globalassets/asrm/asrm-content/news-and-publications/covid-19/covidtaskforceupdate11.pdf?utm_source=Informz&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EmailBlast&zs=ITpBd1&zl=ma5J7



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