



Top tips

COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy and breastfeeding

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1) COVID-19 hasn't gone away.

- Even with greatly reduced testing, there are still over 1,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in England every week¹.
- The commonest symptoms are cough, fever, sore throat, dyspnoea, myalgia and loss of sense of taste².
- Pregnant women are as likely to contract COVID-19 as the general population³.
- 2/3 of pregnant women with COVID-19 are asymptomatic³.

2) Pregnancy is a risk factor for admission and serious illness with COVID-19.

- Pregnancy is a risk factor for severe illness, particularly in the third trimester; the risk of death remains low.
- Pregnant women (or up to six weeks postpartum) admitted with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be given low molecular weight heparin, unless birth is expected within 12 hours or there is a risk of haemorrhage.
- Other risk factors for pregnant women include:
 - Being unvaccinated.
 - Non-Caucasian ethnicity.
 - Pre-pregnancy comorbidity (e.g. hypertension or diabetes) or BMI >25.
 - Maternal age ≥35.
 - Socioeconomic deprivation.
 - Working in healthcare or another public facing setting.

3) COVID-19 can have serious consequences for the foetus³.

- Maternal COVID-19 infection is associated with an approximately doubled risk of stillbirth, but there is no increased risk of first or second trimester pregnancy loss.
- The premature birth rate in mothers with COVID-19 is 2-3 times the background rate.

4) COVID-19 vaccination is safe in pregnancy and breastfeeding³.

- Pregnant women remain a risk group who are offered the COVID-19 booster.
- Vaccination is the best way to protect women and their babies from the known risks of COVID-19 in pregnancy.
- There is no known risk of teratogenesis from COVID-19 infection or vaccination; COVID-19 vaccination is safe to have when breastfeeding.
- Pregnant women who have two doses of primary vaccination and a booster are 88% less likely to need admission with COVID-19 than those who are unvaccinated.
- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccination affects fertility.
- Minor adverse effects are reported at the same rate as in non-pregnant women.
- The current vaccines do not carry a risk of the rare syndrome of vaccine-induced thrombosis and thrombocytopenia (VITT) that was reported with the Oxford-AstraZeneca and Janssen vaccines.

For more resources, visit www.pcwhs.co.uk

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Resources

- [RCOG/RCM information for professionals on COVID-19 and pregnancy.](#)
- [RCOG patient information on COVID-19, pregnancy and women's health.](#)
- [Green book chapter on COVID-19 vaccination.](#)
- [Vaccine knowledge project – COVID-19 vaccination.](#)

References

- 1) UKHSA. [COVID-19](#). April 2025.
- 2) NHS. [COVID-19 symptoms and what to do](#). March 2023.
- 3) RCOG/RCM. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection in Pregnancy](#). March 2022.