Public Health England

NHS

A guide to COVID-19 vaccination

All women of childbearing age, those currently pregnant or breastfeeding

You must read this before you go for vaccination

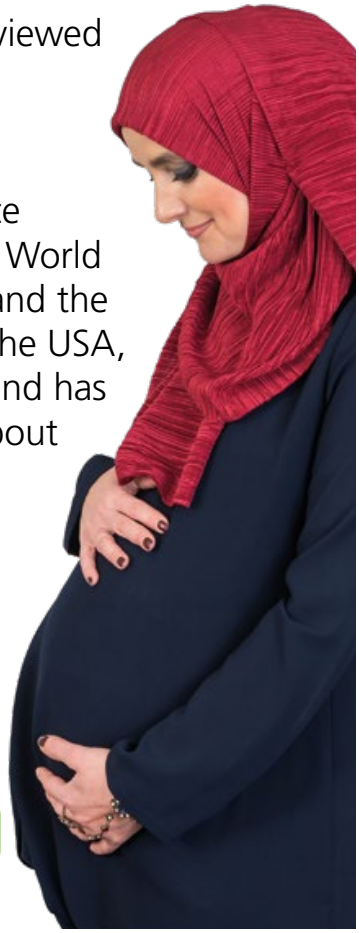
The COVID-19 vaccines available in the UK have been shown to be effective and to have a good safety profile. The early COVID-19 vaccines do not contain organisms that can multiply in the body, so they cannot infect an unborn baby in the womb.

Many vaccines can be given safely in pregnancy so why am I being advised against this vaccine?

The vaccines have not yet been tested in pregnancy, so until more information is available, those who are pregnant should not routinely have this vaccine. Non-clinical evidence is required before any clinical studies in pregnancy can start, and before that, it is usual to not recommend routine vaccination during pregnancy.

Evidence from non-clinical studies of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine has been received and reviewed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). This evidence was also reviewed by World Health Organisation and the regulatory bodies in the USA, Canada and Europe and has raised no concerns about safety in pregnancy.

Non-clinical studies of the Astra-Zeneca COVID-19 vaccine have raised no concerns.



COVID-19 immunisation
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The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recognised that the potential benefits of vaccination are particularly important for some pregnant women. This includes those who are at very high risk of catching the infection or those with clinical conditions that put them at high risk of suffering serious complications from COVID-19.

In these circumstances, you should discuss vaccination with your doctor or nurse, and you may feel that it is better to go ahead and receive the protection from the vaccine.

Breastfeeding

There are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in breastfeeding or on the breastfed infant. Despite this, COVID-19 vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant, and the benefits of breast-feeding are well known. Because of this, the JCVI has recommended that the vaccine can be received whilst breastfeeding. This is in line with recommendations in the USA and from the World Health Organisation.

What does this mean for me?

Here are the key points you should consider:

- if you are pregnant you should not be vaccinated unless you are at high risk – you can be vaccinated after your pregnancy is over
- if you have had the first dose and then become pregnant you should delay the second dose until after the pregnancy is over (unless you are at high risk)

If you are pregnant but think you are at high risk, you should discuss having or completing vaccination with your doctor or nurse.

Although the vaccine has not been tested in pregnancy, you may decide that the known risks from COVID-19 are so clear that you wish to go ahead with vaccination. There is no advice to avoid pregnancy after COVID-19 vaccination.

If you are breastfeeding, you may decide to wait until you have finished breastfeeding and then have the vaccination.

Vaccination, helping to protect those most vulnerable.

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