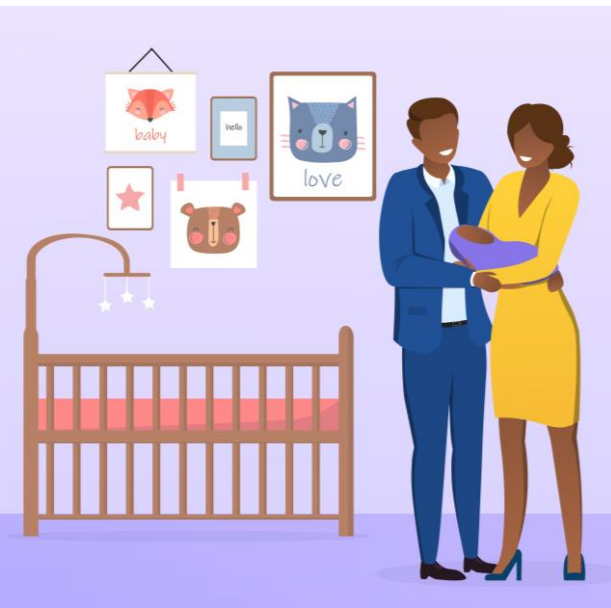




Public Health  
England

This is one of a series of insight cards to support vaccine confidence in various groups and communities

# Increasing vaccine confidence Pregnancy and Fertility for both men and women



Public Health England

## Pregnant?

**Have your COVID-19 vaccines!**

It is important to have both doses of your COVID-19 vaccine to protect you and your unborn baby.

COVID-19 infection is currently circulating and can be serious for pregnant women.

Thousands of pregnant women have been safely vaccinated in the UK and worldwide.

Call 119 or go online to [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/) to register for your vaccination appointment. You can also attend walk in, mobile or pop up vaccination clinics in your area.

COVID-19 immunisation  
Helping to protect you and your pregnancy



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# Fertility for men and women and pregnancy – Context and key messages

## Context

**51,724**

Pregnant women in England have received **at least one dose**

**20,648**

of these women have received their **second dose**

*(Source: COVID-19 vaccine surveillance reports - GOV.UK – July 21)*

- **It is important to have conversations with males as well as females, as men have also reported their concerns and appreciated reassurance**
- On 16 April 2021, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that pregnant women should be offered the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine at the same time as the rest of the population, based on their age and clinical risk group
- It is preferable for pregnant women in the UK to be offered the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines where available, as there is more safety data available on these vaccines in pregnancy

*(Source: [Health chiefs encourage more pregnant women to get their COVID-19 vaccine - GOV.UK – July 21](#))*

## Key messages

- COVID-19 vaccines are recommended in pregnancy.
- Vaccination is the **best way to protect** against the known **risks of COVID-19 in pregnancy for both women and babies**, including admission of the **woman to intensive care and premature birth** of the baby
- Women may wish to **discuss the benefits and risks of having the vaccine with their healthcare professional** and reach a joint decision based on individual circumstances. However, as for the non-pregnant population, pregnant women can receive a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have not had a discussion with a healthcare professional.
- You should **not stop breastfeeding** in order to be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Women **trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination** and there is **no evidence** to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines will **affect fertility in women or men**.
- Having a COVID-19 vaccine **will not remove the requirement for employers** to carry out a risk assessment for pregnant employees, which should follow the rules set out in this [government guidance](#).

[COVID-19 vaccines, pregnancy and breastfeeding \(rcog.org.uk\)](#)

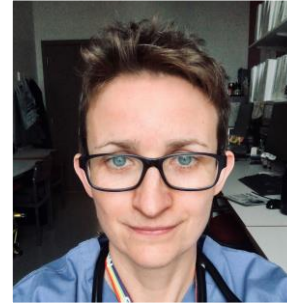
*“I was referred to a website and told to make my own choice, which didn’t help or give me the level of information required to assure me, so I wanted to say a massive thanks to you all for the webinar yesterday, this has helped me decide to have the vaccine.”*

# Fertility for men and women and pregnancy – quotes from the professionals



“The vaccines continue to save thousands of lives and we are **confident that they can be safely offered to pregnant women**, but if you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to discuss these with a healthcare professional.”

*Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE*



“Yesterday I was working with a **pregnant lady with COVID infection who was on a ventilator** and you could see the fear in her eyes. I had to tell her that we needed to plan for an **early delivery for the baby** and that the baby may have complications.”

*Dr Kate Wiles, Obstetric physician at Royal London Hospital*

“As a GP, I see pregnant women all the time. I just want you to be safe - **have both doses of the vaccine** to keep you **protected and well** for yourself and for your baby.”

*Dr Oge Ilozue, GP and Senior Clinical Advisor to London Covid-19 vaccination*



“I encourage you to **continue breastfeeding** as you **cannot pass COVID-19** or the vaccine on to your baby **through your breast milk**.”

*Memuna Sowe, Clinical Matron/Midwife Croydon Health services*



“Pregnant women are at **greater risk of serious illness** if they get **COVID-19**, and those with **severe COVID-19** are **twice as likely** to experience a **stillbirth** and **three times as likely** to have a **preterm baby**. **Getting the vaccine** is the **best way to keep you and your baby safe**.”

*Gill Walton, Chief Executive of the Royal College of Midwives*



“There is **no evidence** the vaccine harms a **man's reproductive system**. However, **being infected with COVID-19 may affect fertility**. Having the vaccine is the **best way** to protect yourself against COVID-19 infection and long-term health complications.”

*Dr Tehseen Khan, GP and Senior Clinical Advisor to London Covid-19 vaccination programme*



# Fertility for men and women and pregnancy – Top Q&As

## Is the vaccine safe for me and my baby? How do you know?

- COVID-19 vaccines offer pregnant women the best protection against COVID-19 disease which can be very serious in later pregnancy for some women.
- Other non-live vaccines, such as whooping cough and flu, are considered to be safe for pregnant women and their unborn babies. COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain live coronavirus or any ingredients that are harmful to pregnant women or their babies.
- We now have data from around 120,000 pregnant women who have been vaccinated and no safety concerns were raised.

## Will having the vaccine affect my ability to have children in the future? How can you be sure?

- Scientists have found absolutely no evidence or reason that any of the vaccines can affect the fertility of men or women; including the British Fertility Society.
- Who also say that those who are donating their eggs or sperm for the use of others can still have a COVID-19 vaccine, as can people undergoing fertility treatment.
- They also recommend, along with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, that people of reproductive age should get a COVID-19 vaccine when they receive their invitation, including people who are trying to have a baby or thinking about having a baby in the future.

## If I have the vaccine, can I breastfeed?

- Latest advice, including from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, is that you cannot pass any vaccine or its ingredients to your baby through breast milk; and so it is fine to continue to breastfeed and have your vaccination.

### It is your decision

so make sure you get your information from a reliable source such as [NHS](#), or the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#).

### If you are at all unsure

speak to a healthcare professional about any concerns you may have about the vaccine and your health before you have the vaccination.

# Fertility for men and women and pregnancy – Insights and Evidence

## Risks from COVID-19 infection

- A systematic review showed that **pregnant women with COVID-19** versus without COVID-19 are more likely to **deliver preterm** and could have an **increased risk of maternal death** and of being admitted to the **intensive care** unit. Their babies are more likely to be admitted to the **neonatal unit**.  
*(Source: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m3320> – Sep 20)*
- **The COVID-19 virus can cause underlying damage** to the testis and also other components of the **male genital tract** **directly or indirectly affecting reproduction**  
*(Source: [Journal of Medical Virology](#) – Nov 20)*
- A systematic review of the literature **provides evidence** that **male gonads may be potentially vulnerable to COVID infections**  
*(Source: [The World Journal of Men's Health](#) – Oct 20)*



## What we know about the vaccine and fertility/pregnancy

- [Real-world data from the United States](#) shows that around **90,000 pregnant women have been vaccinated**, mainly with mRNA vaccines including Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, **without any safety concerns being raised**  
*(Source: [JCVI advice for pregnant women – Apr 21](#))*
- There is absolutely **no evidence**, and **no theoretical reason**, that any of the vaccines can affect the **fertility of women or men**.  
*(Source: [Covid19 Vaccines FAQs.- britishfertilitysociety](#) – Feb 21)*
- When we talked about the **fertility concerns**, we just assumed the hesitancy was from the woman. It wasn't. When we talked to them, they said, 'Look, **our fathers are frightened that no one will marry us if we take the vaccine**'.  
*(Source: [Delivering the COVID-19 vaccine across London Evaluation report](#) - July 2021)*
- Data on accidental pregnancies that occurred during vaccine trials and outcomes from women who received the vaccines suggests that COVID-19 vaccines **do not prevent pregnancies** in humans and there is **no detrimental effect** of vaccination on **early pregnancy**  
*(Source: [Nature Reviews Immunology](#) – Feb 21)*
- **Vaccination in pregnancy protects the newborn infant** against infection by the transfer of **maternal antibodies** across the placenta *(Source: [Full article: Coronavirus disease and vaccination during pregnancy and childbirth: a review of the Israeli perspective and experience \(tandfonline.com\)](#) - July 21)*

# Fertility for men and women and pregnancy - Overcoming the barriers

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## Key Barriers

## Enablers

Concerns regarding effect on fertility in men and women



**Discuss** the **latest research** which suggests that there is **no evidence**, and no reason, that any of the vaccines can affect the **fertility of women or men**; and signpost them to [COVID-19 Vaccines FAQs from the British Fertility Society](#)

Concerns around the effect on an unborn child



**Reassure** the mother and others concerned that these vaccines **do not contain live coronavirus** and nd it is a **non-live vaccine** and signpost them to [COVID-19 vaccines, pregnancy and breastfeeding from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists \(RCOG\)](#)

Concerns around side effects



**Advise pregnant women to discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with their clinician**, including the latest evidence on safety and which vaccines they should receive. Discuss / signpost to [a guide for all women of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding - GOV.UK](#) and [RCOG FAQs](#) which includes JCVI stating that a pregnant woman is not necessarily at higher risk of blood clots following the vaccine just because they have a higher risk of other blood clots

Concerns around safety and breastfeeding



Share [RCOG advice](#); which says that there is **no plausible mechanism** by which any vaccine ingredient could pass to your baby through breast milk. You should therefore not stop breastfeeding in order to be vaccinated against COVID-19

*(Sources: Online Q+A sessions – PHE, NHS & Maternity Action - 27<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021; Debunking myths about fertility and pregnancy with the COVID-19 vaccine - Sutton council - 20/05/21)*



# Fertility for men and women and pregnancy – Information and Resources

## General COVID vaccine information

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine – NHS](#)
- [NHS Vaccine Facts](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Hub - British Islamic Medical Association](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination: easy-read leaflet – PHE](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination: guide for adults - PHE](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination: what to expect after vaccination – PHE](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination: vaccine product information - PHE](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Guidance FAQs - London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine](#)
- [COVID-19 link to vaccination resources on MECC](#)
- [Connect on Coronavirus: public engagement resources-British Society for Immunology](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation Toolkit – DCMS](#)

## Webinars

- [Two recorded Q+A sessions with an expert panel of midwives, doctors and fertility specialists – PHE, GLA, NHS & Maternity Action](#)

## Videos

- [COVID-19: Vaccination programme FAQ explainer videos – YouTube – PHE](#)



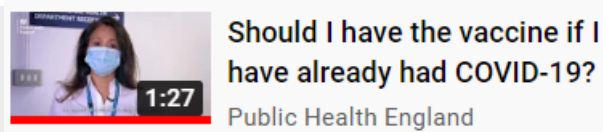
COVID-19 vaccine guide for women of childbearing age ...

Public Health England



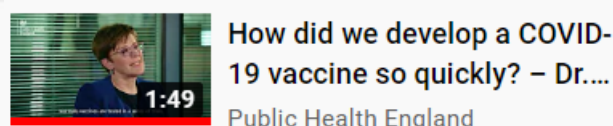
COVID-19 vaccines: can they affect my fertility?

Public Health England



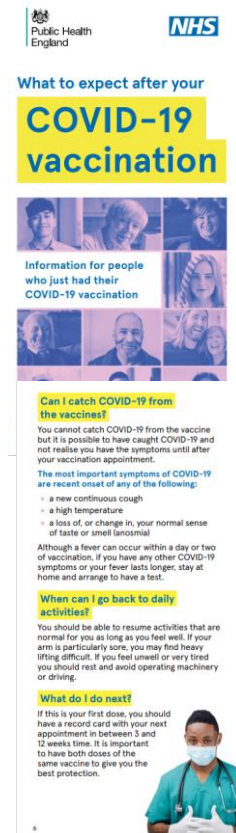
Should I have the vaccine if I have already had COVID-19?

Public Health England



How did we develop a COVID-19 vaccine so quickly? – Dr...

Public Health England



## Vaccine – pregnancy and fertility information and resources

- [COVID-19 vaccination guide for women of childbearing age, currently pregnant or breastfeeding – PHE](#) available in community languages
- [Pregnant? Have your COVID-19 vaccines social media cards – PHE & NHS Health Publications](#)
- [Pregnancy and coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - NHS](#)
- [JCVI issues new advice on COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women - GOV.UK](#)
- [British Society for Immunology Pregnancy Q&A video](#)
- [Combined info sheet and decision aid 20.07.2021 Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists \(rcog.org.uk\)](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccines, pregnancy and breastfeeding \(rcog.org.uk\)](#)
- [Vaccine Pregnancy Real World Safety data – CDC](#)
- [Covid19 Vaccines FAQs – British Fertility Society](#)



Przed udaniem się na szczepienie należy zapoznać się z treścią niniejszego poradnika

W więcej informacji można znaleźć na stronie internetowej [nhs.uk/CovidVaccine](#)

Dostępne w Wielkiej Brytanii szczepionki przeciwko COVID-19 okazały się skuteczne i wykazują się dobrym profilem bezpieczeństwa.

Szczepionki te nie zawierają żywego

Czy przebieg COVID-19 podczas ciąży jest groźny?

Ogólne ryzyko związane z zachowaniem na COVID-19 w przypadku kobiet w ciąży i ich dzieci jest niskie, jednak do zakażenia dochodzi na późniejszym etapie

Information sheet and decision aid: Updated 20 July 2021

All pregnant women in the UK over the age of 18 have now been offered COVID-19 vaccination.

Vaccination is recommended in pregnancy, but the decision whether to have the vaccine is your choice. The information below will help you make an informed choice about whether to get the COVID-19 vaccine if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.

Your options:

Get a COVID-19 vaccine or Wait for more information about the vaccine in pregnancy