**Reproductive Health COVID-19 Vaccine: Frequently Asked Questions**

**COVID-19 Vaccine Limited Distribution**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to provide women Veterans with information about the currently available COVID-19 vaccines. Topics discussed include vaccine recommendations for women who are trying to get pregnant, pregnant women and breastfeeding women. Pregnant women were not included in clinical trials of the available vaccines. Therefore, currently we do not have safety data from clinical trials about use of the vaccine in pregnancy. However, it is important to know that there is ***no evidence*** that COVID-19 vaccines are harmful to pregnant or breastfeeding women. Also, there is not any medical reason to think that the vaccines might be harmful. There is evidence, however, that pregnant women are at greater risk for serious complications of COVID-19. Pregnant women are 3 times more likely to end up in the intensive care unit (ICU) and 2-3 times more likely to need a ventilator (breathing tube) than COVID-19 patients who are not pregnant.

Some of the currently available vaccines require two doses to produce high levels of protection. If the vaccine you are receiving requires two doses, it is very important that you get both. You will not receive full protection from COVID-19 until after the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines.

While experts learn more about the protection vaccines provide, it is important to continue to use all the available tools to stop COVID-19 infections:

* Covering your nose and mouth with a well-fitting mask
* Staying 6 feet away from others
* Washing hands often
* Avoiding crowds

As more vaccines are approved, this guidance may change, so check in with your primary care provider or maternity care provider for updated information. You can also find updated information about the vaccine at the following links:

* [Veterans Health Library](https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/Search/SearchResults.pg?SearchPhrase=COVID-19&SearchType=text&SearchOperator=And)
* [COVID-19 Vaccines at VA](https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/)
* [CDC Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html)

**Can the COVID-19 vaccine give me COVID-19?**

No. The currently available COVID-19 vaccines do not contain a live virus. The vaccines work by telling your immune system to make a protein that teaches your body to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Do I have to get a pregnancy test before I receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

No, you are not required to get a pregnancy test before getting any of the COVID-19 vaccines. The currently available COVID-19 vaccines do not contain ingredients that are known to be harmful to pregnant women or to the developing fetus.

**Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant?**

We do not yet have safety data about use of the vaccine in pregnancy from the clinical trials that have been done so far. However, based on what is known about these vaccines, experts believe they are likely to be safe in pregnancy.

Twelve expert groups on women and pregnancy published a joint statement recommending that pregnant and breastfeeding women get a COVID-19 vaccine when they are eligible to receive it. Many women may want to discuss their decision with their maternity care provider or primary care provider, but they are not required to consult their provider before deciding to be vaccinated.

**Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am breastfeeding?**

COVID-19 vaccines are being offered to breastfeeding women. Although there is no safety data about the use of the vaccine in breastfeeding women, there is no evidence the vaccine is harmful to breastfeeding women or their babies. You do not have to delay or stop breastfeeding to get the vaccine.

**Will the COVID-19 vaccine make me or my partner infertile?**

Among the millions of individuals who have so far received the vaccine, no evidence has been found to suggest it affects fertility. If you are planning or trying to get pregnant, you can get a COVID-19 vaccine. You do not need to delay getting pregnant after you get a vaccine. The current COVID-19 vaccines will require two doses. If you find out you are pregnant after you receive the first dose, you should still get the second dose.

**Can I get a mammogram after getting the COVID-19 vaccine?**

COVID 19 vaccination may cause some brief changes on the mammogram. These changes will go away in 4-6 weeks. If possible, and when it does not unduly delay care, consider scheduling screening exams prior to the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination or 4-6 weeks following the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination. Don’t change existing appointments at this time.

**If I decide to get a COVID-19 vaccine, what should I expect?**

It is common to feel [side effects](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html) after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, especially after the second dose. Side effects to vaccinations are common because the body is responding by starting to build its own immune response. You may experience body aches, fatigue, and fever. You may have pain at the injection site. These side effects may last a few days. This is normal. If you have a fever or other side effects after getting the vaccine, you can take acetaminophen, an over-the-counter medication that is safe during pregnancy. If you are worried about your side effects or they last more than a few days, talk with your maternity care provider or other health care professional.

**Where can I get more information?**

You can get more information at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. This information is updated regularly.

* [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Findex.html&data=04%7C01%7C%7C49dc166f554745397e9508d8d2f86d11%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637491311712968145%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=P76GFZEOIc%2BmbpNd9dslzv23p1mTjdgUGLPMCXkveGs%3D&reserved=0)
* [Vaccination Considerations for People who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html)
* [The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) COVID-19 Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding: A Message for Patients](https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding)