



Australian Government



# Pregnancy, breastfeeding, and COVID-19 vaccines

Comirnaty (Pfizer) and Spikevax (Moderna) vaccines are recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding women and those planning a pregnancy. Women can receive the vaccine at any stage of pregnancy.

The risk of serious, negative outcomes from COVID-19 is higher for pregnant women and their unborn baby. Pregnant women who get COVID-19 have a higher risk of needing to go to hospital or needing intensive care. Their unborn baby will have a slightly higher chance of being born prematurely (born before 37 weeks of pregnancy) and needing to go to a hospital for care.

Vaccination is the best way to reduce these risks. You will need two doses of the Pfizer vaccine three to six weeks apart, or two doses of the Moderna vaccine, four to six weeks apart.

A study from the United States, of more than 35,000 pregnant women showed the side effects after vaccination were very similar in both pregnant and non-pregnant women. Vaccination does not increase the chances of complications such as premature delivery, stillbirth, small for gestational age infants and birth defects.

As COVID-19 data on pregnant women increases, we will continue to update our advice.

## What are the possible side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy?

Common side effects following COVID-19 vaccines include:

- fever
- sore arm
- headache
- muscle pain
- joint pain
- chills.

If you have any of these side effects after your vaccination, you can take paracetamol to reduce these common side effects. Paracetamol is safe in all stages of pregnancy.

Studies from around the world have not found any side effects specific to pregnant women or their babies. However, it is possible that there are very rare side effects that researchers have not found yet.

### **Are there any benefits for my baby from having a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy?**

Pregnant women with COVID-19 have a higher risk of stillbirth or premature (early) delivery. Their babies are also more likely to show distress during delivery, or to need treatment in a newborn intensive care area in the hospital.

Vaccination is the best way to reduce these risks.

Scientific evidence suggests that the antibodies created by pregnant women after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine can cross the placenta, particularly in women vaccinated early in pregnancy who received both doses before their baby was born. These antibodies may provide the baby with some protection against COVID-19 for the first few months of life.

### **What are the recommendations for breastfeeding women?**

Pfizer and Moderna are recommended for women who are breastfeeding. You can continue breastfeeding before or after your vaccination.

### **What are the recommendations for women planning pregnancy?**

Pfizer and Moderna are also recommended for women who are planning pregnancy. Getting vaccinated before conceiving means you are likely to have protection against COVID-19 throughout your pregnancy. Please note that:

- You do not need to avoid becoming pregnant before or after a COVID-19 vaccination.
- Vaccination does not affect fertility.
- You do not need to have a pregnancy test before getting vaccinated.

### **For more information**

To find out where you can get your COVID-19 vaccine, visit <https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/>

If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, speak to your doctor, go to [health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines-languages](https://health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines-languages), or call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080.



For interpreting services, call 131 450.