

## Frequently asked questions: COVID-19 vaccination and pregnancy, planning a family, and breastfeeding

The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) and the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommend that all pregnant women are routinely offered mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, such as Pfizer and Moderna, at any stage of pregnancy.

If you are pregnant, you should discuss vaccination with your health professional.

The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are preferred for people aged 12 years and older in Australia, and for those who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy.

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine requires two doses 21 days apart. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine requires two doses 28 days apart.

**Published research and real-world evidence from other countries has shown that mRNA vaccines are safe for those who are pregnant.**

Vaccination is the best way to reduce the risk of becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19.

**Those who are pregnant and their unborn baby have a significantly higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 than non-pregnant people:**

- > **5 times higher risk of requiring a hospital admission.**
- > **2-3 times higher risk of needing treatment in a hospital intensive care unit.**
- > **1½ times higher chance of being born preterm or admission to a special care nursery.**

### **Can a person who received AstraZeneca for their first dose, and becomes pregnant, receive Pfizer or Moderna for their second dose?**

If you received your first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine and then become pregnant, you can safely receive the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for your second dose.

Pfizer and Moderna are the preferred COVID-19 vaccines for pregnancy.

The recommended interval between the first dose of AstraZeneca and second dose of Pfizer or Moderna is 4 to 12 weeks.

While it is generally recommended that the same vaccine is used for both doses, the reason for a preference for Pfizer or Moderna during pregnancy is due to more information regarding safety of Pfizer and Moderna for pregnant women compared with AstraZeneca.

You and your provider may wish to consider the following factors:

- > There is a growing body of evidence supporting the safety of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy.
- > There is still very limited data on the safety of viral vector vaccines (such as the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine) in pregnancy.
- > There is comparatively less data on the safety and efficacy of mixed vaccine schedules than completing the series with the same vaccine.

## Is COVID-19 vaccination safe for those who are pregnant?

Yes, mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (such as Pfizer and Moderna) are safe for those who are pregnant, based on accumulated real-world evidence from other countries. Over 200,000 pregnant women have been vaccinated in the USA and UK, with no adverse effects on the person, pregnancy or baby.

Research shows that the antibodies produced by vaccination cross the placenta and may provide some protection to newborn babies. This is the same for whooping cough and flu vaccines that have been given during pregnancy for many years.

## Is COVID-19 vaccination safe for breastfeeding?

Yes, it is safe. You do not need to stop breastfeeding before or after vaccination.

Several small studies have shown that the antibodies induced by the COVID-19 vaccine pass into breastmilk. This may provide your baby with some protection against COVID-19, however there have not yet been any studies to confirm such protection.

## Is COVID-19 vaccination safe for women planning pregnancy?

Yes, it is safe. The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (such as Pfizer and Moderna) are recommended for those who are planning pregnancy. You do not need to avoid becoming pregnant before or after vaccination. Getting vaccinated before conceiving means you are likely to have protection against COVID-19 throughout your pregnancy.

## Can COVID-19 vaccination cause infertility in men or women?

Vaccination does not affect fertility. There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines have any impact on fertility. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will not approve a vaccine for use in Australia unless it is safe and effective.

There is no requirement to have a pregnancy test before getting vaccinated.

## Further information

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccines, visit the [Australian Government Department of Health](#) website, which also has a range of [translated information](#).

For information about the use of the COVID-19 vaccines in South Australia, visit [covidvaccine.sa.gov.au](https://covidvaccine.sa.gov.au) or call the SA COVID-19 Information Line 1800 253 787.

## References

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10. [www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-pfizer-australia-comirnaty-bnt162b2-mrna-approved-use-individuals-12-years-and-older](https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccine-pfizer-australia-comirnaty-bnt162b2-mrna-approved-use-individuals-12-years-and-older)
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