

Vaccination in pregnancy

Dear Ladies

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding or plan to get pregnant then this is for you

The press statement by the Director General of Health Malaysia on August 11th, 2021, highlighted the seriousness of COVID-19 infection in pregnancy. It is alarming to note that there have been 70 maternal deaths since March 2020. There is also a notable increase in COVID-19 infections in pregnancy and significant increase in ICU admissions in pregnancy.

Vaccination is vital in the prevention and transmission of COVID-19 infections.

It is understandable to have some concerns about vaccinations or any drugs that are taken by mothers during pregnancy and breast feeding. However, there is abundant data available as evidence that vaccination is safe during pregnancy and breastfeeding. There has been no evidence of defects in the baby after vaccination. The maternal side effects are rare and similar to those who are not pregnant. There is also a potential reduction in the risk of preterm labor and stillbirth if a mother contracts COVID-19 infections after vaccination

We strongly advise that if you are pregnant, you should receive the COVID-19 vaccine and you should take it at the earliest opportunity. It is preferable to take it after 12 weeks of pregnancy but in high risk circumstances like for most of our pregnant population in Malaysia, the balance of risk would be that it is safer for it to be taken at any time in pregnancy.

It is also safe if you are breastfeeding and there is no need to stop breastfeeding. If you are planning to conceive, be reassured that it is safe and there is no need to delay the pregnancy

If you have not received the vaccine, please make arrangements to contact your doctor as soon as possible. You can also discuss with your doctors your concerns if any. There are also resources available for more information and some are listed below.

All vaccines are safe for you and the mRNA vaccine currently has the largest data on safety. The Government has prioritised you as priority in the National Immunisation Programme and is rolling out Pfizer-Comirnaty (mRNA) for women in your category. There are more vaccinations centres currently and they follow strict SOP's which makes it safe for you to visit these vaccination centers.

So, ladies, please vaccinate whether before, during or after pregnancy

An appeal message by

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Trustees of the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia

For more information:

1. Clinical Guidelines on Covid-19 vaccination in Malaysia. Ministry of Health, Malaysia. 3rd edition. Addendum 10th August 2021
2. Covid-19 vaccines while pregnant or breastfeeding CDC August 1, 2021
3. **ACOG** and SMFM Recommend Joint Covid 19 vaccination for Pregnant individuals. July 30, 2021 American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist
4. Covid 19 vaccines, pregnancy and breastfeeding. July 19, 2021, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist UK
5. The Pfizer BioNTech Covid 19 vaccine, 20th, April 2021 World Health Organisation
6. Covid 19 Vaccination guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning a pregnancy. 30th July 2021. Australian Government