Note: This guidance is no longer in effect. This document is provided only for historical purposes. Visit the [California Department of Public Health's COVID-19 website](#) for current COVID-19 public health guidance.

COVID-19 Vaccine and Pregnancy:
What You Need to Know

When you are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination, you may wonder if you should get immunized during pregnancy. You may be asking "What if I become pregnant shortly after getting vaccinated?" The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecology (ACOG), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and CDC have stated that women who are pregnant or breastfeeding may receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The information here can help you make the best choice based on your individual circumstances and risk of exposure to COVID-19.

How does COVID-19 affect pregnant women?
- Changes to your body during pregnancy put you and your baby at risk for serious complications from COVID-19. Pregnant women who have COVID-19 and show symptoms are more likely to need care in an intensive care unit (ICU), to need a ventilator (for breathing support), or to die from the illness.
- Having COVID-19 may also increase your chances of pregnancy complications such as preterm delivery (birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy).

Besides pregnancy, are there other risk factors that put me at higher risk for complications from COVID-19?
- Yes. Pregnant women with some health conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure may have an even higher risk of severe illness. You are also at increased risk if there is a high rate of COVID-19 infection in your community or if you are over 35 years of age, are an essential worker or have contact with people outside your household who do not wear masks.

Is it safe to get a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy?
- So far, the vaccine studies have not enrolled pregnant women, so risks to pregnant women and their unborn babies are not known for sure. However, based on what is known about how these vaccines work and the ingredients they contain, experts believe they are unlikely to pose a risk to a pregnant woman or her fetus. Volunteers in vaccine studies who did not know they were pregnant when they got the COVID-19 vaccine are also being followed for birth outcomes.
- Like other vaccines given during pregnancy, it is possible that getting the COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy may help protect your baby from COVID-19 disease after birth.
- COVID-19 vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. No safety step was skipped. Every COVID-19 vaccine went through the same careful and detailed stages of testing in people that other vaccines do: Phase 1 (small group of volunteers), Phase 2 (hundreds of volunteers), and Phase 3 (tens of thousands of volunteers and a placebo group). Volunteers in these trials were chosen to include people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those

with pre-existing medical conditions, to see how the vaccines protect a variety of people.

- The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are mRNA vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain live virus and therefore cannot give someone COVID-19 disease. It is impossible for mRNA vaccines to change someone's DNA because the mRNA does not enter the nucleus of the cell where the DNA is housed. Cells also break apart the mRNA quickly.

What are the side effects of COVID-19 vaccine?
- Side effects include: soreness or redness at the injection site, headache, fever, chills, and tiredness. These symptoms usually go away in a couple of days and are a sign that the body is developing antibodies to protect itself against COVID-19.
- If you develop a fever after receiving the vaccine, CDC recommends taking acetaminophen to lower your temperature.

How effective are COVID-19 vaccines?
- Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna mRNA vaccines have been shown to be about 95% effective.

If I get vaccinated, do I still have to wear a mask?
- Yes. Public health experts recommend the continued practices of wearing a mask, social distancing, and washing your hands even after receiving the vaccine.

Can breastfeeding women get a COVID-19 vaccine?
- CDC recommends breastfeeding women be given the option to be immunized.
- There are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in breastfeeding women, the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant or on milk production. However, mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant.
- ACOG recommends that breastfeeding women get a COVID-19 vaccine. There is no need to stop breastfeeding if you choose to get immunized.

Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I am trying to get pregnant?
- Yes. If you are planning to get pregnant, you can get a COVID-19 vaccine. You do not need to delay getting pregnant after you get a vaccine.

If you still have questions, talk to your prenatal care provider.
For more information, visit:
- CDC: http://bit.do/pregnancyCOVID
- ACOG: http://bit.do/COVIDinfo