

**The Alabama Department of Public Health in
HAN Alert
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COVID-19 Vaccination for Pregnant Individuals

On July 30, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), the two leading organizations representing specialists in obstetric care, recommended that all pregnant individuals be vaccinated against COVID-19. The support of vaccinations during pregnancy by the organizations reflect evidence demonstrating the safe use of the COVID-19 vaccines during pregnancy from tens of thousands of reporting individuals over the last several months, as well as the current low vaccination rates and concerning increase in cases.

Data review has indicated that COVID-19 infection puts pregnant individuals at increased risk of severe complications including death; yet only about 22 percent of pregnant individuals have received one or more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vaccination is safe before, during, or after pregnancy.

What do we know about COVID-19 and pregnant individuals?

Pregnant and recently pregnant individuals are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 when compared with non-pregnant peers. The CDC includes pregnant and recently pregnant individuals in its “increased risk” category for severe COVID-19 illness. Although the absolute risk for severe COVID-19 is low, available data indicate an increased risk of ICU admission, need for mechanical ventilation and ventilatory support (ECMO), and death reported in pregnant women with symptomatic COVID-19 infection, when compared with symptomatic non-pregnant women. Additionally, compared to asymptomatic pregnant patients, severe critical COVID-19 illness has been associated with increased risk of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, preterm births and pregnancy loss.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) recently announced the admission of 50 pregnant women with COVID-19 infection during the month of August with at least 7 on ventilators and two deaths in pregnant individuals along with a number of fetal losses occurring in the second and third trimesters. In addition, there have been numerous admissions to other hospitals within Alabama.

What factors can increase risk?

Several factors can increase a pregnant or recently pregnant person’s risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19. Factors such as:

- Having underlying medical conditions <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-care/underlyingconditions.html>
- Being older than 25 years
- Living or working in a community with high numbers of COVID-19 cases
- Living or working in a community with low levels of COVID-19 vaccination
- Working in places where it is difficult or not possible to keep at least 6 feet apart from people who might be sick
- Being part of some racial and ethnic minority groups, which have been put at [increased risk of getting sick from COVID-19 because of the health inequities they face](#)

The Alabama Department of Public Health joins ACOG and SMFM in strongly urging all pregnant individuals-along with recently pregnant, planning to become pregnant, lactating and other eligible pregnant individuals to be vaccinated against COVID-19. With cases rising as a result of the Delta variant, the best way for pregnant individuals to protect themselves against the potential harm from COVID-19 infection is to be vaccinated.

The FDA fully approved COMIRNATY (COVID-19 vaccine, mRNA) previously known as Pfizer-BioNTech on August 23, 2021. For full prescribing information visit <https://www.fda.gov/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/comirnaty-and-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine#comirnaty>
The downloadable package insert can be found at <https://www.fda.gov/media/151707/download>

There is a pregnancy exposure registry for COMIRNATY. Please encourage individuals exposed to COMIRNATY around the time of conception or during pregnancy to register by visiting <https://mothertobaby.org/ongoingstudy/covid19-vaccines/>.