



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

February 11, 2021

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to provide you information about COVID-19 vaccination in pregnant individuals. Pregnant people are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and might be at increased risk for adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as preterm births, compared with pregnant women without COVID-19.

While there are limited data about the safety of the currently authorized mRNA COVID-19 vaccines for people who are pregnant, experts believe that mRNA vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to the pregnant person or fetus because mRNA vaccines are not live vaccines. Both the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#) have stated that pregnant people who are part of a group recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccine may choose to be vaccinated. [The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\) and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine](#) agree that pregnant and breastfeeding individuals who are eligible for the vaccination should be given the opportunity to receive the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

Clinicians can have conversations with pregnant patients to help them decide whether to get vaccinated with a vaccine that has been authorized for use under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). While a conversation with a clinician may be helpful, it is not required.

Key considerations that clinicians can discuss with their pregnant patients include:

- The likelihood of exposure to COVID-19
- Risks of COVID-19 to them and potential risks to their fetuses
- What is known about vaccine efficacy, known side effects of the vaccine, and the lack of vaccine research done during pregnancy
- Authorization of administration due to age
  - Under the EUAs, the following age groups are authorized to receive vaccination:
    - Pfizer-BioNTech: ages  $\geq 16$  years
    - Moderna: ages  $\geq 18$  years
  - Children and adolescents outside of these authorized age groups should not receive COVID-19 vaccinations at this time.

Side effects can occur with COVID-19 vaccine use in pregnant people, similar to those expected among non-pregnant people. Pregnant people who experience fever following vaccination may be counseled to take acetaminophen as fever has been associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes. Acetaminophen may be offered as an option for pregnant people experiencing other post-vaccination symptoms as well.

There is no recommendation for routine pregnancy testing before receipt of a COVID-19 vaccine. Those who are trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination.

For further information or questions, please visit [Maryland COVID link](#) and the CDC's website on [Vaccination Considerations for People who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shelly Choo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shelly Choo, MD, MPH  
Director, Bureau of Maternal and Child Health

