

**EXPECTING  
A BABY?**

**PROTECT YOURSELF AND  
YOUR BABY WITH YOUR  
FREE COVID-19 AND FLU  
VACCINATIONS**

WHATEVER YOUR

**REASON**

**DON'T  
MISS  
YOUR  
VACCINE**



If you're pregnant or thinking about having a baby, **don't forget that you have free access to important vaccinations that will keep you and your baby safe.**

For example, pregnant women in their third trimester (after 28 weeks) are more likely to be seriously unwell and have a higher risk of their baby being born prematurely if they develop COVID-19. Both the COVID-19 and flu vaccinations are designed to provide lasting protection and keep pregnant mothers and babies safe.

### **Have you accessed your free COVID-19 vaccination yet?**

If you are unsure about getting vaccinated whilst pregnant, facts from trusted sources like the NHS, Royal College of Midwives and Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists can help you decide.

To book your free COVID-19 vaccine now and find out more about pregnancy, breastfeeding, fertility and coronavirus vaccination, visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/pregnancy-breastfeeding-fertility-and-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/>

Throughout these pages, we have compiled some of the most frequent questions for pregnant mothers, expectant families, and those looking to have children.



## Why do I need the vaccine?

**COVID-19 infection is still circulating and can be serious for pregnant women.** So, it is important to have both doses of your COVID-19 vaccine to protect you and your unborn baby.

## I've heard the vaccine affects fertility and harms the baby, is this true?

**No, this is untrue.** There's no evidence the COVID-19 vaccines have any effect on your chances of becoming pregnant, and the vaccines cannot give you or your baby COVID-19.

None of the vaccines contains a live virus and so there is no risk that the pregnant woman or her baby could get Covid-19 from the vaccine.

## Is the vaccine safe?

**The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines are safe and effective.** They give you the best protection against COVID-19. Millions of people and thousands of pregnant women have been safely vaccinated in the UK and worldwide.

All vaccines used in the UK must be approved by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The MHRA makes sure the vaccines meet strict international standards for safety, quality, and effectiveness. Once a vaccine is approved, it's closely monitored to continue to make sure it is safe and effective.

## Is there a preferred vaccine for pregnant women?

**Yes,** pregnant women are advised to have the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna mRNA vaccines because of more extensive experience of their use in pregnancy. There is no reason to believe that any of the Covid-19 vaccines would be harmful in pregnancy.

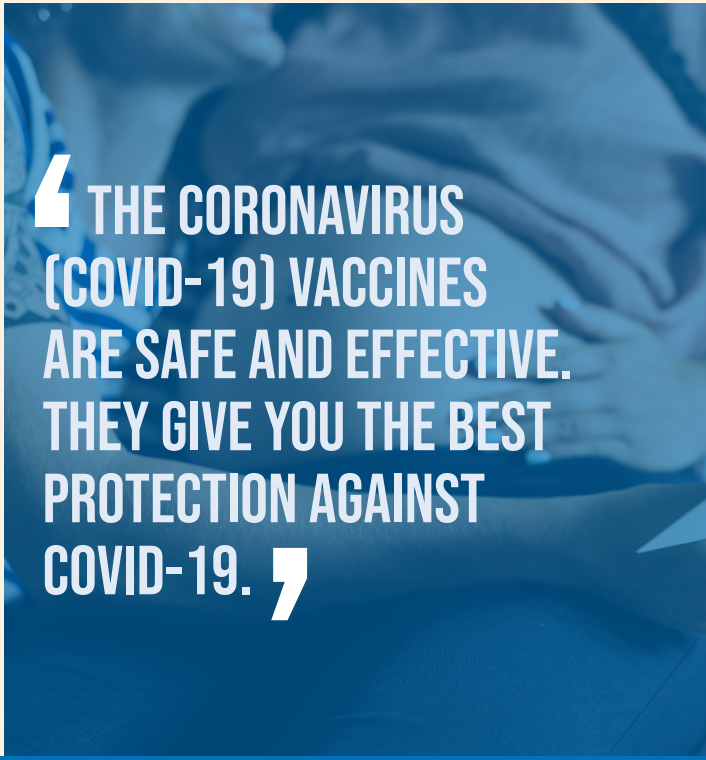
For more information, please visit:

<https://www.britishfertilitysociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Covid19-Vaccines-FAQ-2.1.pdf>

## Why is getting the vaccine now better for me and my baby than getting the vaccine after I give birth?

**COVID-19 vaccines offer pregnant women the best protection** against COVID-19 disease which can be serious in later pregnancy for some women.

Although the overall risk from COVID-19 disease in pregnant women and their new babies is low, in later pregnancy some women may become seriously unwell and need hospital treatment.



**THE CORONAVIRUS  
(COVID-19) VACCINES  
ARE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE.  
THEY GIVE YOU THE BEST  
PROTECTION AGAINST  
COVID-19.**

## **I have already had one dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine prior to or earlier in my pregnancy. I am now pregnant and due my second dose. What should I do?**

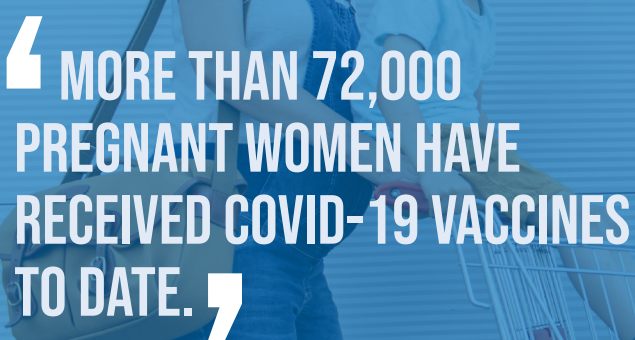
**Pregnant women who had the AstraZeneca vaccine for their first dose are advised to complete with the same vaccine.** The second dose will be important for longer lasting protection against COVID-19.

Currently you can choose whether to have the second dose of AstraZeneca in pregnancy (as typically given) or defer until after pregnancy - however a second dose of the same vaccine is recommended to ensure maximum protection against COVID-19.

If you are unsure about receiving the second dose of AstraZeneca, you should arrange to speak to a midwife, obstetrician or GP. You can also use the [Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists decision aid on vaccination in pregnancy](#) to support your choice.

## **I thought COVID-19 only affects older people, isn't this true?**

**No, this is untrue.** More and more younger people, who are less likely to be vaccinated, are getting COVID-19 and becoming seriously ill. This includes pregnant women who have a higher risk of intensive care admission than women of the same age who are not pregnant. Women with COVID-19 disease are also 2 to 3 times more likely to have their babies early than women without COVID-19.



**‘ MORE THAN 72,000  
PREGNANT WOMEN HAVE  
RECEIVED COVID-19 VACCINES  
TO DATE. ’**

## **How many women have had the vaccine?**

**More than 72,000 pregnant women have received COVID-19 vaccines to date.**

## **What information is available about receiving the vaccine and changes in menstrual cycles?**

**The MHRA is reviewing reports of suspected side effects of menstrual disorders** (period problems) and unexpected vaginal bleeding following vaccination against COVID-19 in the UK. The rigorous evaluation completed to date does not support a link between changes to menstrual periods and related symptoms and COVID-19 vaccines.

The menstrual changes reported are mostly transient in nature. The MHRA continues to closely review reports of suspected side effects of menstrual disorders and unexpected vaginal bleeding.

## **The flu season is approaching too, is it necessary to have the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**More people are likely to get flu this winter** as fewer people will have built up natural immunity to it during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, research shows you're more likely to be seriously ill. So, getting vaccinated against flu and COVID-19 will provide protection for you and those around you for both these serious illnesses.

## **Do I need the COVID-19 vaccine if I've already had the flu vaccine?**

**Yes, if you're able to,** it's important to have the flu vaccine (jab) and the coronavirus vaccine. You should wait 1 week after you've had your flu vaccine (jab) before you get the coronavirus vaccine.



## Is the flu vaccine safe during pregnancy?

**Yes.** Studies have shown that it's safe to have the flu vaccine during any stage of pregnancy, from the first few weeks up to your expected due date. Women who have had the flu vaccine while pregnant also pass some protection on to their babies, which lasts for the first few months of their lives. It's safe for women who are breastfeeding to have the vaccine.



THE BEST TIME TO HAVE THE  
FLU VACCINE IS DURING THE  
MONTHS FROM SEPTEMBER TO  
MARCH.

## When is the best time to have the flu vaccine?

**The best time to have the flu vaccine is during the months from September to March.** This is when flu is most prevalent. You can have the flu vaccination at any point during your pregnancy. This will be offered by your GP or your midwife.

If you have any further worries or concerns about having a vaccination in pregnancy, please discuss this with your midwife or visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/vaccinations/>

for more information.

**Don't forget to book your free appointment to access vital vaccinations to keep you and your baby safe.**

Visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/pregnancy-breastfeeding-fertility-and-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/>

to book your appointment today.

To find out more about vaccines in south east London, visit [nhsselvax.com](https://nhsselvax.com)

## Sources

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- <https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/maternity-services-obstetrics/your-antenatal-care/vaccinations-in-pregnancy-including-covid-vaccine/>
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