Information to support discussions about COVID-19 vaccination and pregnancy

Background

People who are pregnant have been prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination and can now book a vaccine appointment, regardless of age. To book an appointment, **call 1-833-838-2323** and they can inform the operator that they are pregnant. Pregnant people should also register at **gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated** to ensure they receive an invitation to book a second dose appointment at the appropriate time.

Discussion points

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine for women who are pregnant/people who are pregnant (as well as those who are planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding) is safe and the best way to protect them against COVID-19.
- Pregnant women and pregnant individuals who have COVID-19 appear more likely to develop complications requiring intensive care admission than women and individuals who are not pregnant. The rate of ICU admissions for people who are pregnant is on par with adults aged 55-59.
- The recommendation to get vaccinated during pregnancy is supported by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) and public health experts in B.C.
- Women should not be excluded or deferred from vaccination due to being pregnant. The vaccine is recommended at any time during pregnancy.
- Most pregnant women/people who are pregnant will be booking through the provincial Get Vaccinated system and will be offered an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna), however any of the COVID-19 vaccines are recommended in pregnancy
- Any COVID-19 vaccine is a good vaccine. Blood clotting events that have been reported with the AstraZeneca/COVISIHELD vaccines do not occur by the same mechanism that increase the risk of blood clots during pregnancy. The risk of a blood clotting event from COVID-19 infection is higher than the risk from these two vaccines.
- The decision to get vaccinated is up to the individual. For most people, getting a COVID-19 vaccine is the safest choice to protect them from COVID-19.
- In making the decision, they should consider their individual circumstances, including their likelihood of exposure to the COVID-19 virus at work, home and community.

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- The decision to get vaccinated is up to the individual. For most people, getting a COVID-19 vaccine is the safest choice to protect them from COVID-19.
- In making the decision, they should consider their individual circumstances, including their likelihood of exposure to the COVID-19 virus at work, home and community.
- They should also consider if there are additional factors that may put them at greater risk of experiencing severe illness from COVID-19 such as being very

overweight, diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, kidney, liver, lung or heart disease, or smoking.

- Some will decide their risks of getting a serious COVID-19 infection are very low, and choose not to be vaccinated. Others will decide their very real risks support vaccination.

Patient resources:
  o [Information handout](http://bccdc.ca/vaccineconsiderations#pregnant) developed by BC Centre for Disease Control and Perinatal Services BC at http://bccdc.ca/vaccineconsiderations#pregnant
  o Further information at: https://www.pregnancyinfo.ca/covid/

Addressing common questions from patients

Could the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility?
Background: The widespread social media concern stems from misinformation about the similarities between syncytin-1 (used for placental implantation) and the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein.

  o Information for client:
      o We understand these questions have been circulating online.
      o The vaccine will not impact your fertility. There has been some misinformation spreading about the similarity of a protein from the virus that causes COVID-19, the spike protein, and a protein that is needed to become pregnant and that the antibodies developed following vaccination could interfere with pregnancy. In fact, while the two proteins have some similar building blocks, they are quite different. The antibodies produced against the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein will not react or interfere with the protein needed to become pregnant.

Timing of COVID-19 vaccine with other vaccines:
  o Usually we recommend that you do not get the COVID-19 vaccine within 14 days of another vaccine so that the immune responses to the vaccines do not interfere with one another, and so that if you experience side effects from one vaccine, they are not confused with another.
  o We recommend that you wait 28 days after COVID-19 vaccine to get the Tdap vaccine for pertussis. However, if the vaccines are given closer together, neither needs to be repeated.

Heard it was not recommended for pregnant people
  o The SOGC recommends any COVID-19 vaccine at any time during pregnancy or breastfeeding.
  o There is a very real risk of COVID-19 and we know that women and people who are pregnant are more likely to experience severe illness.

o The vaccine was not specifically tested on people who were pregnant. However, during the trials, some people who received the vaccines ended up getting pregnant. Since then, millions of doses have now been administered around the world including to pregnant people, without a safety signal being identified. Available emerging studies of safety of the mRNA vaccines in pregnancy are supportive of safety.

o Based on what we know about how these vaccines work, there is no theoretical reason to think they would be unsafe, or less safe in pregnancy.

o The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) and public health experts in B.C. all agree and recommend that pregnant people should be vaccinated. Other provinces, including New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are also prioritizing pregnant people for COVID-19 immunization

Risk of blood clots from the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine

- Most people who are pregnant will be booking through the provincial Get Vaccinated system and will be offered an mRNA vaccine: Pfizer or Moderna.

- Any COVID-19 vaccine is a good vaccine. Blood clotting events that have been reported with the AstraZeneca/COVISIHELD vaccines do not occur by the same mechanism that increase the risk of blood clots during pregnancy.
  The risk of a blood clotting event from COVID-19 infection is higher than the risk from these two vaccines.

- The BCCDC website has more information about the blood clotting events and information about monitoring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines.