



Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau
Vaccination saves lives



Even once vaccinated with one or two doses, you must continue to follow other protective guidance as required

COVID-19

vaccination

A guide for all women who are planning a pregnancy, or who are pregnant or breastfeeding

May 2021



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The COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the UK have been shown to be effective and have a good safety record.

What is the advice about COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy?

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert group, has advised that pregnant women should be offered COVID-19 vaccines at the same time as people of the same age or clinical risk group.

The vaccines have not yet been tested in clinical trials on pregnant or breastfeeding women. However, more than 110,000 pregnant women have been vaccinated with Pfizer or Moderna vaccines in the USA and no safety issues have been identified, so these two vaccines are preferred in pregnancy. Vaccination is very effective in preventing COVID-19 infection.

Anyone who has already started vaccination and is offered a second dose whilst pregnant should have a second dose with the same vaccine unless they had a serious side effect after the first dose.



Other vaccines, for example whooping cough and flu vaccines, have been given to millions of pregnant women and found to be safe for them and their babies.

It is your choice whether to have the vaccine. For some pregnant women, the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination are particularly important.

What are the risks of COVID-19 infection in pregnancy?

- Pregnant women are more likely to be admitted to hospital or have a severe illness (compared with those who are not pregnant), especially in the later stages of pregnancy.
- Pregnant women with underlying medical conditions are at a higher risk of severe illness.
- About two-thirds of women who test positive for COVID-19 in pregnancy have no symptoms at all. However, some pregnant women become seriously ill and are admitted to hospital with COVID-19, particularly if they have underlying medical conditions.
- In the later stages of pregnancy, women are at increased risk of becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19. If this happens, it is about three times more likely that your baby will be born prematurely, which can affect their long-term health.

What does that mean for me?

If you are pregnant, you should consider getting vaccinated. You are encouraged to read the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists' decision aid at this link: www.rcog.org.uk/covid-vaccine before attending your vaccination appointment. The information in this aid can help you make an informed decision. If you have any further questions speak to your midwife or GP.

The vaccines do not contain organisms that can multiply in the body so cannot infect an unborn baby in the womb. You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccines have been given to large numbers of people to make sure they meet strict standards of effectiveness and safety. Future studies will provide more information.

You do not need to avoid becoming pregnant after receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.

Having the COVID-19 vaccination does not replace the workplace risk assessment, which pregnant staff who are working should have.

Can I have the vaccine if I am breastfeeding?

The benefits of breastfeeding are well known, and the COVID-19 vaccines are not known to be a risk when breastfeeding. The expert advice from the World Health Organization (WHO) is that the vaccine can be given to women who are breastfeeding. However, we do not yet have much safety information on the use of COVID-19 vaccines while breastfeeding. If you are breastfeeding, or planning to breastfeed, you can continue breastfeeding after you have been vaccinated.

The vaccine and fertility

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 vaccines will affect your fertility or your chance of becoming pregnant.

Does the vaccine have side effects?

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. This is because vaccines work by triggering a response in your immune system. Most of these are mild and only last a few days, and not everyone gets them.

Even if you do have symptoms after the first dose, you should still have the second dose.

Very common side effects include:

- having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had the injection;
- feeling tired;
- a headache;
- general aches, chills, or flu like symptoms.

You may have a mild fever for two to three days after the vaccination but a high temperature is unusual and may mean you have COVID-19 or another infection. You can rest and take paracetamol to help you feel better. Do not take more than the recommended dose of paracetamol (follow the advice on the packet). An uncommon side effect is swollen glands in the armpit or neck on the same side as the arm where you had the vaccine. This can last for around 10 days, but if it lasts longer see your doctor.

There have been reports of an extremely rare condition causing blood clots and unusual bleeding following the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. This is being carefully reviewed. Because of the high risk of complications and death from COVID-19, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the World Health Organization say the balance is very much in favour of vaccination. If you receive the AstraZeneca vaccine you should read the information about COVID-19 vaccination and blood clotting here: phw.nhs.wales/patientinfo



What should I do if I am concerned about my side effects?

Common side effects after the vaccination normally last less than a week. If your symptoms seem to get worse or if you are concerned, go to 111.wales.nhs.uk online, and if necessary call NHS 111 Wales by dialling **111** or your GP surgery. If 111 is not available in your area, call **0845 46 47**. Calls to NHS 111 Wales are free from landlines and mobiles. Calls to 0845 46 47 cost 2p per minute plus your telephone provider's usual charge.



If you experience any of the following from around four days to four weeks after your vaccination, you should get urgent medical advice.

- ◆ A new, severe headache which is not helped by usual painkillers or is getting worse
- ◆ An unusual headache which seems to get worse when lying down or bending over. With this headache you may also have:
 - Blurred vision, nausea and vomiting
 - Difficulty with your speech
 - Weakness, drowsiness or seizures
- ◆ New, unexplained pinprick bruising or bleeding
- ◆ Shortness of breath, chest pain, a swelling in your leg, or persistent abdominal pain

If you had any of the above symptoms after your first vaccination, you should speak to your doctor or specialist before having the second dose.

If you do get advice from a doctor or nurse, make sure you tell them about your vaccination (show them your vaccination card if possible) so that they can assess you properly.

You can also report any side effects through the Yellow Card scheme (see '**More information**').

What do I need to do?

You will be told about when and where to get vaccinated. On the day of the appointment, wear practical clothing so it's easy to reach the top of your arm. If you have a fear of needles or feel anxious, let the person giving you the vaccine know. They will be understanding and support you.

It is important to have both doses of the vaccine to give you the best longer-term protection. Keep your card safe and make sure you get your second dose.

What should I do if I am unwell on the day of my appointment?

If you are unwell with a fever, call to cancel the appointment and wait until you have recovered before having the vaccine. You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you are self-isolating or waiting for a COVID-19 test or result.

Can I give COVID-19 to anyone when I am protected by the vaccine?

Two doses will greatly reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill but will not completely protect you from catching COVID-19. The vaccines reduce the risk of passing on the virus, but do not completely prevent it. So, it is still important you continue to follow the COVID-19 guidance to protect those around you.



To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues you still need to:

- practice social distancing;
- wear a face mask;
- wash your hands carefully and often; and
- follow the current guidance at: gov.wales/coronavirus

Remember:

COVID-19 is spread through droplets breathed out from the nose or mouth, particularly when speaking or coughing. It can also be picked up by touching your eyes, nose and mouth after touching contaminated objects and surfaces.

Three rules to KEEP WALES SAFE



Wash your
hands



Wear a
face covering



Keep
apart

More information

You can find out more information about COVID-19 vaccines, including their contents and possible side effects at coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/productinformation

You can report suspected side effects online at coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk or by downloading the Yellow Card app.

If you have any questions or want more information, you can visit 111.wales.nhs.uk, talk to your doctor or midwife or call **NHS 111 Wales**.

If 111 is not available in your area, please call **0845 46 47**. Calls from landlines and mobiles cost 2p per minute (plus your telephone provider's usual charge).

To find out how the NHS uses your information, visit 111.wales.nhs.uk/lifestylewellbeing/yourinfoyourrights

For other formats of this leaflet including Easy Read, large print, British Sign Language video, Recite Me accessibility software and other languages visit:



phw.nhs.wales/covid-19-vaccination

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