Information on COVID-19 vaccination this autumn for pregnant women

Key points

- All pregnant women are <u>strongly advised</u> to get a booster vaccination this autumn.
- By having a booster, you can strengthen your protection against severe illness, at least temporarily.
- The COVID-19 vaccination is <u>safe</u> – including during pregnancy. It protects you and your child.
- For more information → *Factsheet 'Information on the COVID-19 vaccination'*

Why am I particularly at risk during pregnancy?

The risk of severe illness caused by COVID-19 is higher in pregnant women than in their non-pregnant peers for a number of reasons. For example, the immune system changes during pregnancy. You may be more susceptible to bacteria or viruses, for example a coronavirus infection. Severe illness means you might need to be treated in an intensive care unit, intubated and put on a ventilator.

In addition, serious illness caused by COVID-19 during pregnancy puts you at a higher risk of premature birth. This may result in your child having to be cared for in the neonatal intensive care unit.

After the birth you are no longer at especially high risk, but a COVID-19 vaccination is still recommended during breastfeeding. Breastfeeding mothers who are vaccinated pass on antibodies against COVID-19 to their babies in breast milk.

How does vaccination provide protection?

Vaccination protects you and your child.
The antibodies that your body produces after vaccination can also protect your baby.

When should the booster be given?

We recommend you receive the vaccination after the 12th week of pregnancy (i.e. from the second trimester). However, you can in principle be vaccinated earlier in your pregnancy. We also recommend you get a COVID-19 vaccination if you are planning a pregnancy. Vaccination can be given from 4 months after the last COVID-19 vaccination or 4 months after a known coronavirus infection.

Other vaccinations with inactivated vaccines (such as the flu vaccination) can be given before, at the same time as or after a COVID-19 vaccination.

Which vaccine is recommended?

For pregnant women, we recommend vaccination this autumn with an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna), preferably with a variant-adapted (bivalent) mRNA vaccine, if available. The same applies to those who are breastfeeding. The former (monovalent) vaccines are also suitable. Current data show that the monovalent mRNA vaccines still provide effective protection against severe illness and hospitalisation caused by the new Omicron variants.

What happens if I haven't yet been vaccinated against COVID-19?

All pregnant women who have not yet been vaccinated are advised to get a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn, with two doses of vaccine, 4 weeks apart[1].

How can I take extra precautions?

Those who live in the same household as someone who is pregnant can also get vaccinated. The risk of severe illness in healthy, vaccinated people aged under 65 is very low due to existing protection. Vaccination offers them minimal and short-term protection against infection with mild illness. For the current virus variants, vaccination does not prevent transmission of the virus. There are other ways you can take extra precautions e.g. wearing a mask indoors. Please follow our basic principles:

→ *Website 'Protect yourself and others'.*

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[1] For people under the age of 30 in certain situations, preferably with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

What else do I need to know about?

For questions related to maternity protection in the workplace,
please consult the SECO documentation.
→ www.seco.admin.ch/mutterschutz.

Further information

Costs: You don't have to pay for a COVID-19 vaccination if it is recommended for you.

Where and when you can get vaccinated: Find out where you can get vaccinated on the website or by calling the Infoline for your canton *(www.foph-coronavirus.ch/cantons)*

You will find more information on the COVID-19 vaccination on the FOPH website: *www.foph-coronavirus.ch/vaccination* or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Links:
→ *How does the vaccination work? | FOPH (bag-coronavirus.ch)*
→ *Frequently asked questions (FAQs) (admin.ch)*

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