



COVID-19

Pregnant and Recently Pregnant People

At Increased Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19

Updated Jan. 24, 2022

What You Need to Know

- Although the overall risks are low, people who are pregnant or recently pregnant are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 when compared to people who are not pregnant. People who have COVID-19 during pregnancy are also at increased risk for preterm birth (delivering the baby earlier than 37 weeks) and stillbirth and might be at increased risk for other pregnancy complications.
- Having certain underlying medical conditions, and other factors, including age, can further increase the risk for developing severe COVID-19 illness during or recently after pregnancy (for at least 42 days following end of pregnancy).
- People who are pregnant or recently pregnant and those who live with or visit them need to take steps to [protect themselves from getting sick with COVID-19](#).

Increased Risk of Severe Illness

If you are pregnant or were recently pregnant, you are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19 compared to people who are not pregnant. Pregnancy causes changes in the body that could make it easier to get very sick from respiratory viruses like the one that causes COVID-19. These changes in the body can continue after pregnancy.

Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may need:

- Hospitalization
- Intensive care
- A ventilator or special equipment to help them breathe



People with COVID-19 who become severely ill can die. See [why pregnancy is included in the list of underlying medical conditions](#) that increase a person's risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Certain factors can increase risk

Other factors can further increase the risk for getting severely ill from COVID-19 during or recently after pregnancy, such as:

- Having certain [underlying medical conditions](#)
- Being older than 25 years
- Living or working in a community with high numbers of COVID-19 cases
- Living or working in a community with low levels of COVID-19 vaccination

- Working in places where it is difficult or not possible to keep at least 6 feet apart from people who might be sick
- Being part of some racial and ethnic minority groups, which have been put at [increased risk of getting sick from COVID-19 because of the health inequities they face](#)

Effect on Pregnancy Outcomes

People with COVID-19 during pregnancy are more likely to experience preterm birth (delivering the baby earlier than 37 weeks) and stillbirth and might be more likely to have other pregnancy complications compared to people without COVID-19 during pregnancy.

See the [latest data on birth and infant outcomes](#) among pregnant women with COVID-19.

COVID-19 Vaccine and Pregnancy

COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for [people who are pregnant](#), breastfeeding, [trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future](#). In addition, everyone who is eligible, including those who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future, should get a [booster](#) shot and stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines. If you have questions about getting vaccinated, talking with your healthcare professional might help, but is not required.

If you are pregnant and have questions about COVID-19 vaccine

If you would like to speak to someone about COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy, you can contact MotherToBaby. MotherToBaby experts are available to answer questions in English or Spanish by phone or chat. The free and confidential service is available Monday–Friday 8am–5pm (local time). To reach MotherToBaby:

- Call 1-866-626-6847
- Chat live or send an email [MotherToBaby](#) 

Getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. People who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine should get vaccinated as soon as possible and continue masking. To maximize protection from variants and prevent possibly spreading the virus to others, people who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines should wear a mask indoors in public in areas of [substantial or high transmission](#). With the emergence of variants, this is more urgent than ever. Learn more about what you can do [when you have been fully vaccinated when](#) you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines.

Reducing Your Risk of Getting COVID-19

It is especially important for people who are or were recently pregnant, and those who live or visit with them, to [take steps to protect themselves and others from getting COVID-19](#).

Limit in-person interactions with people who might have been exposed to COVID-19, including people within your household, as much as possible. If you or someone in your household is sick with COVID-19, follow guidance for [isolation](#).

Important Ways to Slow the Spread of COVID-19

- Get a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) as soon as you can. [Find a vaccine](#).
- Wear a [well-fitting mask that covers your nose and mouth](#) to help protect yourself and others.
- [Stay 6 feet apart from others](#) who don't live with you.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- [Test](#) to prevent spread to others.



- [Wash your hands often](#) with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

Staying Healthy During and After Your Pregnancy

Keep all of your healthcare appointments during and after pregnancy. Visit with your healthcare provider for all recommended appointments. If you're concerned about going to your appointments in person because of COVID-19, ask your healthcare professional what steps they are taking to protect patients from COVID-19, or ask about telemedicine options. If you need help finding a healthcare professional, contact your nearest hospital, clinic, [community health center](#), [📍](#) or [health department](#).

- Talk to your healthcare professional about how to stay healthy and take care of yourself and the baby.
- Ask any questions you have about the best place to deliver your baby. Delivering a baby is always safest under the care of trained healthcare professionals.
- You should also talk to your healthcare professional if you think you are experiencing [depression during or after pregnancy](#).
- **Get recommended vaccines during pregnancy.** These [vaccines](#) can help protect you and your baby.
 - Get a [flu vaccine](#) every year. Others living in your household should also get vaccinated to protect themselves and you.
 - Get the Tdap vaccine to protect your baby against [whooping cough](#), which can have similar symptoms to COVID-19. CDC recommends all pregnant people receive a Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy. In addition, everyone who is around the baby should be [up to date with their whooping cough vaccine](#).
- **Call your healthcare professional if you have any concerns about your pregnancy, if you get sick, or if you think that you may have COVID-19.**
- **Do not delay getting emergency care because of worries about getting COVID-19.** Emergency departments have steps in place to protect you from getting COVID-19 if you need medical care.
 - If you need emergency help, call 911 right away. If someone else is driving you to the emergency department, call the emergency facility while you are on the way. If you must drive yourself, call before you start driving.
 - Tell them that you are pregnant or were recently pregnant and are having an emergency.
- **Seek medical care immediately if you experience any [urgent maternal warning signs and symptoms](#)** (for example, headache that won't go away, dizziness, fever, severe swelling of hand, face, arm or leg, trouble breathing, chest pain or fast-beating heart, severe nausea and throwing up, or vaginal bleeding or discharge during or after pregnancy). These symptoms could indicate a potentially life-threatening complication.

If You Are Sick or Think You Were Exposed to COVID-19

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, contact your healthcare professional within 24 hours, and [follow steps for when you feel sick](#).

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, learn about breastfeeding and [caring for newborns when the mother has COVID-19](#). Current evidence suggests that breast milk is not likely to spread the virus to babies.

Additional Resources

PREGNANT OR JUST HAD A BABY? TAKE THESE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19 | COVID-19 |

Pregnant and recently pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19 compared to people who are not pregnant.

Severe illness means that a person with COVID-19 may need:

- Hospitalization
- Intensive care
- A ventilator or special equipment to help them breathe

People with COVID-19 who become severely ill can die.

If you are pregnant or recently had a baby, here's what you can do to protect yourself:

Get a COVID-19 vaccine. The CDC recommends that people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future get vaccinated against COVID-19. In addition, everyone who is ages 18 and older, including those who are pregnant, should get a **booster shot**.

Avoid interacting in person with people who might have been exposed to COVID-19 as much as possible. If you or someone in your household is sick with COVID-19, follow recommendations for isolation.

If you go out or interact with people who don't live with you, you should:

- Wear a **mask**.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who doesn't live with you.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid crowds and indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors.

Keep all of your recommended healthcare appointments during and after your pregnancy including your prenatal care appointments.

- Some of these appointments can be done virtually, like on a phone or on a computer.

Get recommended vaccines, including the flu vaccine and the whooping cough (Tdap) vaccine.

Ask your healthcare provider if you can get a 30-day (or longer) supply of your medicines, so you can make fewer trips to the pharmacy.

- If possible, ask someone to go to the pharmacy for you.

Call your healthcare provider if you have any health concerns.

- If you need emergency help, call 911 right away. Don't delay getting emergency care because of COVID-19.

 [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

 [PDF - 339 KB, 1 page]

Keep Your Baby Healthy and Safe Take These Steps During the COVID-19 Pandemic

KEEP YOUR BABY HEALTHY AND SAFE TAKE THESE STEPS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Get vaccinated.

- COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of people getting COVID-19 and can also reduce the risk of spreading it.
- Be sure to get everyone in your family who is 5 years of age or older vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Everyone who is ages 18 and older should also get a **booster shot**.

Do not put a mask or face shield on your baby

Babies move frequently. Their movement may cause the plastic face shield or mask to block their nose and mouth, or cause the strap to strangle them.

- Children younger than two should not wear **masks**, or face shields.
- Putting a face shield or mask on your baby could increase the risk of **sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)** or could strangle or suffocate your baby.

Limit visitors to see your new baby

The birth of a new baby typically brings families together to celebrate. Before allowing visitors into your home:

- Consider the risk of COVID-19 to yourself, your baby, people who live with you, and visitors, like grandparents or other **people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19**.
- Bringing people who do not live with you into your home can increase the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- Some people without symptoms can spread the virus.
- Limit in-person gatherings and consider other options, like celebrating virtually, for people who want to see your new baby.

Keep 6 feet between your baby and people who do not live in your household and between your baby and those who are sick

- Consider the risks of COVID-19 to you and your baby before you **decide whether to go**, for activities other than healthcare visits or child care.
- Ask your **child care program** about the plans they have in place to protect your baby, family, and their staff.

 [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

 [PDF - 857 KB, 2 pages]

Pregnant or Just Had a Baby? Take These Steps to Protect Yourself From COVID-19

Protect yourself and your baby from COVID-19. Get vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future.

The benefits of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any known or potential risks of vaccination during pregnancy.

There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause problems trying to get pregnant.

COVID-19 vaccination in people who are pregnant or breastfeeding builds antibodies that might protect their baby.

Ask your provider about the COVID-19 vaccine.

 [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

 [PDF - 550 KB, 1 Page]

Protect yourself and your baby from COVID-19. Get vaccinated.

Related Pages

- › [COVID-19 Toolkit for Pregnant People and New Parents](#)
- › [COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#)
- › [Breastfeeding and Caring for Newborns if You Have COVID-19](#)
- › [How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
- › [What to Do If You Are Sick](#)

Related Research and More Information

Related Research

Zambrano LD, Ellington S, Strid P, et al. Update: Characteristics of Symptomatic Women of Reproductive Age with Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection by Pregnancy Status — United States, January 22–October 3, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1641–1647. DOI: 10.15585/mmwr.mm6944e3.

Allotey, J., et al., Clinical manifestations, risk factors, and maternal and perinatal outcomes of coronavirus disease 2019 in pregnancy: living systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ*, 2020. 370: p. m3320. doi: 10.1136/bmj.m3320 

Galang RR, Newton SM, Woodworth KR, et al. Risk factors for illness severity among pregnant women with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection – Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies Network, 22 state, local, and territorial health departments, March 29, 2020 -January 8, 2021. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 2021; ciab432. doi:10.93/cid/ciab432 

Ko JY, DeSisto CL, Simeone RM, et al. Adverse pregnancy outcomes, maternal complications, and severe illness among U.S. delivery hospitalizations with and without a COVID-19 diagnosis [published online ahead of print, 2021 May 12]. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2021;ciab344. doi:10.1093/cid/ciab344 

Woodworth KR, Glass EG, Neelan M, et al. Birth and Infant Outcomes Following Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2

woodworth KK, Oisen EO, Neelam V, et al. Birth and Infant Outcomes Following Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Pregnancy — SET-NET, 16 Jurisdictions, March 29–October 14, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1635–1640. DOI:10.15585/mmwr.mm6944e2

DeSisto CL, Wallace B, Simeone RM, et al. Risk for Stillbirth Among Women With and Without COVID-19 at Delivery Hospitalization — United States, March 2020–September 2021. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2021;70:1640–1645. DOI: 15585/mmwr.mm7047e1

More Information

[Urgent Maternal Warning Signs](#)