

COVID vaccine safe, recommended for pregnant women, CDC says

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Pregnant women should not hesitate to get coronavirus vaccines, the U.S.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in updated guidance issued Wednesday.

The latest recommendation comes after new data collected by the agency showed no raised risk for miscarriage in mothers-to-be who get the shots during the first 20 weeks of their [pregnancy](#). Previous research has shown similar safety with the vaccines in women in later stages of pregnancy, the CDC added.

The strengthened guideline could boost vaccination rates in a group that has been reticent to get shots; only 23% of pregnant women have gotten COVID vaccines.

"[The] CDC encourages all pregnant people or people who are thinking about becoming pregnant and those breastfeeding to get vaccinated to protect themselves from COVID-19," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said in an agency news release. "The vaccines are safe and effective, and it has never been more urgent to increase vaccinations as we face the highly transmissible Delta variant and see severe outcomes from COVID-19 among unvaccinated pregnant people."

Previously, the country's leading health agency had only said that pregnant women were "eligible" for the vaccine.

Sascha Ellington, team lead for the Emergency Preparedness and Response team in the CDC's Division of Reproductive Health, said the new guidance was shaped by new data on the vaccine's effects on pregnant women, increased risks of COVID-19 in pregnancy and low vaccination rates among pregnant [women](#).

"Taken together, the time was right to come out with a stronger recommendation to hopefully increase the [vaccination rates](#) in [pregnant women](#) and hopefully protect them against COVID-19," Ellington told

the *Washington Post*.

Since the vaccine has only been available since December, there is little data on the vaccines' effects on birth outcomes, Ellington added. But the small number of pregnancies followed to term have not identified any safety signals, she noted.

On Monday, groups including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics said data shows the [vaccine](#) is safe and effective when given during pregnancy and has no impact on fertility.

"Pregnant individuals are at increased risk of severe COVID-19 infection, including death," the organizations said in a statement. "With cases rising as a result of the Delta variant, the best way for pregnant individuals to protect themselves against the potential harm from COVID-19 infection is to be vaccinated."

Dr. Adam Urato, a maternal-fetal medicine specialist in Framingham, Mass., told *The New York Times* that his patients have wanted more solid evidence that the vaccines are safe.

"The one question my patients ask me all the time is, are we absolutely sure that these vaccines won't affect my baby?" he said.

More information: Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more on [COVID vaccines](#).

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