

First UK data on COVID-19 vaccine uptake and outcomes in pregnant women

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New findings, published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, have shown that there is no difference in adverse pregnancy outcomes between vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals.

The paper, led by researchers at St George's, University of London, also reveals the low numbers of [pregnant women](#) accepting COVID-19 vaccination, with less than one-third having received at least one dose.

The study of 1,328 [women](#), who gave birth between 1st March and 4th July 2021, measured the uptake of COVID-19 vaccination, alongside pregnancy safety outcomes. The data show that only 141 women in the study received at least one dose of the [vaccine](#) before giving birth.

When assessing specific characteristics, pregnant women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were found to be significantly less likely to have received the vaccine. The results also indicate that [younger women](#) and women of color were less likely to have received the vaccine.

Women diagnosed with diabetes before pregnancy were found to be around ten times more likely to have received the vaccine—highlighting the increased uptake in this higher-risk group.

When comparing pregnancy outcomes between vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals, the results showed similar rates of adverse outcomes between groups—including the number of stillbirths and fetal abnormalities, as well as the number of women requiring cesarean section delivery or intensive care unit admission. No outcomes were found to be more or less likely in the vaccinated group compared to the non-vaccinated group.

Speaking on the results, Professor Asma Khalil, lead author on the paper from St George's, University of London, said: "With high rates of COVID-19 in the community and the easing of restrictions, it's particularly concerning to see this low uptake of vaccination among pregnant women—especially among groups that we know have been hit hardest during the pandemic already.

"Our results add to the evidence that COVID-19 vaccination is safe in pregnant women and should encourage those who may be hesitant to consider receiving the vaccine."

Dr. Edward Morris, president at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, added: "This is the first data from the UK showing the safety outcomes in pregnancy after having the COVID-19 vaccine."

"The data shows that pregnant women who had received the COVID-19 vaccine were not at an increased risk of stillbirth, nor their babies more likely to have fetal abnormalities or be small at gestational age, compared to women who had not had the vaccine."

"With emerging data like this, we hope pregnant women feel reassured that the vaccine is safe in pregnancy and it is the best way to protect women and their babies from the known harms of COVID-19 in [pregnancy](#), including severe illness and premature birth."

"We are seeing higher numbers of pregnant women in hospital with severe symptoms of COVID-19 and urge pregnant women take up the offer of a vaccine."

More information: Helena Blakeway et al, COVID-19 Vaccination During Pregnancy: Coverage and Safety, *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ajog.2021.08.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2021.08.007)

Provided by St. George's University of London

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