

# CDC pushes hard on vaccination for pregnant women in new advisory

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(HealthDay)—The country's leading health agency on Wednesday

implored all Americans who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning to become pregnant to get a coronavirus vaccine.

COVID-19 poses a serious risk to women who are expecting, since they are vulnerable because of pregnancy's dampening effect on their [immune system](#), experts say.

But less than one-third of pregnant women have received coronavirus vaccines before or during their pregnancies, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's even lower for Black women, of whom only 15% are vaccinated.

"Pregnancy can be both a special time and also a stressful time, and pregnancy during a pandemic is an added concern for family," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said in the agency's [urgent plea](#). "I strongly encourage those who are pregnant or considering pregnancy to talk with their [health care provider](#) about the protective benefits of the COVID-19 [vaccine](#) to keep their babies and themselves safe."

Last month alone, 22 pregnant women died of the coronavirus in the United States, bringing the total number since the beginning of the pandemic to 161. About 125,000 [pregnant women](#) have tested positive for COVID-19 during the pandemic, including 22,000 who were hospitalized, the CDC said.

The risks are not only to the mothers. The virus also raises the chances of stillbirth and other poor outcomes for infants, according to the CDC.

People who are pregnant and have COVID-19 are also more likely to develop a dangerously [high blood pressure](#)—a condition called preeclampsia— than those who don't have COVID-19, and they are more at risk for preterm birth.

Unfortunately, about 97% of those who were infected with the virus when they were hospitalized—for either the illness or for their labor and delivery—were not vaccinated, *The New York Times* reported.

Absolute risk of severe disease is low, but symptomatic pregnant patients are twice as likely to be admitted to the [intensive care unit](#) or require significant interventions, such as mechanical ventilation, the CDC noted. They may also be more likely to die.

Pregnant women were not included in the trials for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which has meant there is more limited data for them, but studies since the vaccines were authorized have found that the vaccines produce a robust immune response in pregnant people, did not damage the placenta, and did not increase the risk of miscarriage, the *Times* reported.

**More information:** The U.S. National Institutes of Health has more on [COVID-19 and pregnancy](#).

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