

# Study finds no higher risk of miscarriage after COVID-19

February 19 2024

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LUMC research has shown that women who previously had a miscarriage due to COVID-19 are not at increased risk of having another miscarriage or a stillbirth. Nor are preventive drugs needed during the

pregnancy.

The long-term effects of miscarriages caused by COVID-19 were not previously known. LUMC gynecologist Marie-Louise van der Hoorn explains the uncertainty this caused, "Parents thought: 'It's not going to happen again, is it?' and doctors thought: 'Let's prescribe [immunosuppressant drugs](#) so that the placenta will hopefully continue to work properly.' But these drugs also cause all sorts of side effects."

So a study was started in Leiden. In 2021, researchers from the LUMC and Erasmus MC discovered a link between COVID-19 and placental insufficiency. LUMC pathologist Lotte van der Meeren explains what happens when coronavirus invades the placenta, "A placenta is a kind of tree with lots of tufts and the virus settles on these tufts. You can compare it with a tree full of caterpillars, with the caterpillars as the coronavirus. Once the tree is full, oxygen exchange is no longer possible and the placenta literally fails. And if the placenta fails, things also go wrong with the baby."

## Chronic placenta disease

Infectious diseases such as malaria, CMV and listeria can cause placenta disease. We know that the chance of the disease returning in a subsequent pregnancy is very low. But there is also a rare variant in which the recurrence rate is very high.

The [new study](#), published in the *Journal of Infection*, aimed to research the recurrence rate of COVID-19-related [placenta](#) disease. It included parents who were affected by the effects of the virus. Of the 19 new pregnancies, 17 ended in a [live birth](#). The two miscarriages that occurred were due to other causes, says Van der Hoorn.

The study was small but worthwhile, says Van der Hoorn. "You remove

a lot of [uncertainty](#), drugs are no longer needed and how fantastic is that moment when parents can hold a healthy child in their arms."

**More information:** Emily F. Cornish et al, Stillbirths due to placental COVID infection associated with chronic histiocytic intervillitis do not recur in subsequent pregnancies, *Journal of Infection* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jinf.2024.01.001](#)

Provided by Leiden University

Citation: Study finds no higher risk of miscarriage after COVID-19 (2024, February 19)  
retrieved 27 April 2024 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-02-higher-miscarriage-covid.html>

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